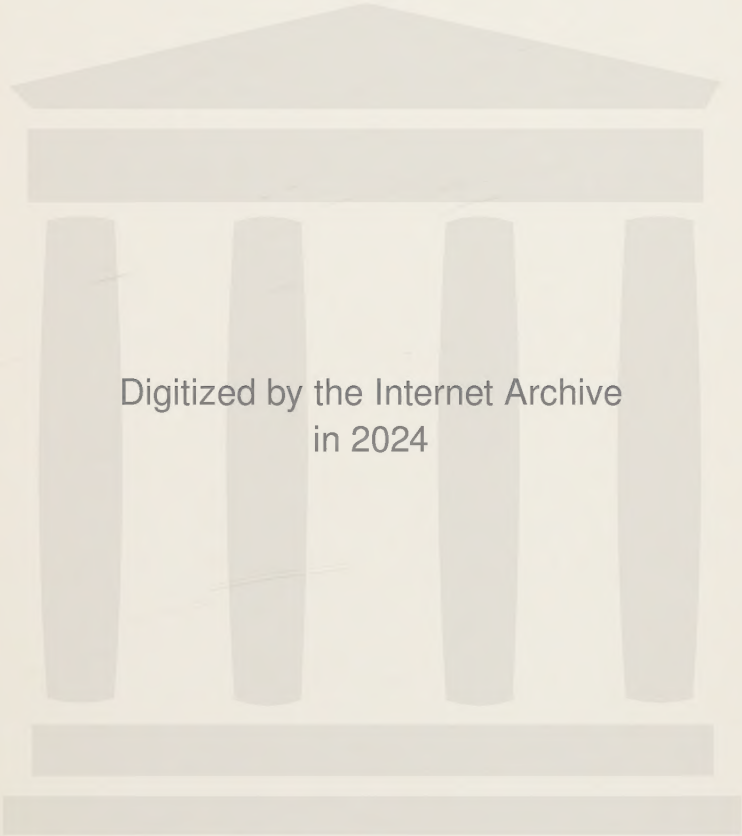
SOME MARINERS OF FRANCE

MEADE MINNIGERODE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SOME MARINERS OF FRANCE

BY

MEADE MINNIGERODE

"The talk is all of the sea, of the navy, of the coasts. . . . Our seas are all astir."

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, 1689.

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SOME MARINERS OF FRANCE

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For

P. F. G.

"Papa, les petits bateaux, qui
vont sur l'eau, ont-ils des jambes?"

—Old French Song.

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Staff of the French Navy, of the Naval Library at Brest, of the Naval Museum at Brest, of the Naval Archives at Brest, and of the Salorges Museum at Nantes.

And while they appear in their proper place in the Bibliography, the author wishes here to emphasize his indebtedness to Mr. de La Roncière's History of the French Navy, and Mr. Tramond's Manual of French Maritime History, without constant reference to which this book could not have been undertaken. And his special indebtedness, again, to Mr. de La Roncière, for his generous release of his recent discoveries concerning Christopher Columbus.

M. M.

New York, October 1, 1929

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SOME MARINERS OF FRANCE

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CHAPTER I

GREAT SHIPS

1

This volume is not a history of the French navy, or of the French merchant marine, or of French commerce, or exploration, or navigation. It does not purpose to provide a chronological or sustained recital of any of these ancient activities; only to present at random some of the more engrossing pages of that chronicle of maritime effort which the French seaman—the "man of the sea" from those shores which little by little were added to the realm to make France—has been for centuries embellishing and dignifying.

One is apt to forget the sailors, the men of the sea, while contemplating the territorial military history of France; to forget the constantly breathless saga of the North Sea, of the Channel, of the Mediterranean, of the distant islands across the ocean. And with eyes turned towards that eastern land frontier from Flanders to Italy, the French people themselves have often, and their kings and ministries too frequently, of necessity perhaps forgotten that other frontier, the sea frontier,

from Flanders to Italy again—from Flanders all along the coasts of Normandy, and Brittany, and Gascony, and Languedoc, and Provence.

Provinces and races of men of varying blood and speech—the Gaul, the Northman, the Celt, the Latin—acknowledging a long succession of changing allegiances prior to their ultimate political absorption into the unity of France, but geographically always a part of France, and spiritually ever a portion of her maritime heritage and tradition. So they must be considered, and so in this volume they are considered. The ancestry of her seamen, Normans, Bretons, Bordelese, Basques, Marseillese. Provinces and races of men that were going hardily to sea, with a magnificent temerity, some of them in very fine ships indeed, before the Romans came; that were still going hardily to sea, with a splendid gusto, in the days of Richelieu and Colbert, in beautiful ships of their own making which the English and the Dutch were frank to admire and copy; that have continued ever since to go to sea, with the same gusto and the same hardihood, to man the ships of war, and the fishing fleets, and the merchantmen. Because the sea is in the blood that flows in their veins. Normans and Bretons, Bordelese, Basques and Marseillese.

A maritime frontier and a maritime people facing three Seas, to the North, to the South, to the West—the whole Atlantic Ocean crashing home there in the West, on those murderous crag bound Brittany beaches of ancient Armorica, The Land on the Sea. Seamen from time immemorial—fishermen, mariners, privateers. Whole populations that were never anything else, that can never be anything else, that do not ask to be anything else, whose children are born with salt on their

lips, the thunder of surf in their ears and the flash of foam in their eyes.

The French *hommes de mer.*

2

Great ships.

It is a significant thing that a search for ships—not the galleys of the Mediterranean, of the Levant, not the skin sided coasting coracles of Britain, but proper ships made for the Western Ocean and the brutal seas of the Ponant—should take one back two thousand years, some sixty years and no one knows how many before the Christian era, to the westernmost ends of Gaul. And it is a fitting thing that one of the earliest recorded pages of the chronicle of maritime France should have been written in that westernmost part of Gaul, in Brittany when it was still Armorica, long before the Bretons came from Britain, by men who were Armoricans, and who called themselves Venetes, and who have left their name to be preserved in the town of Vannes, in the Morbihan.

Armorica, legendary Land on the Sea—a part of Arthur's later Lyonness, in which stood Broceliande, the enchanted forest where Merlin sleeps—westernmost land of Gaul where at its extremity the Pointe du Raz and the Bay of the Trespassed, which is where Ulysses found the entrance to the underworld, look across at the Ile de Sein, mysterious island of the Dead, which was once Circe's home. So they will tell you in those ancient places, and many other curious, haunted, venerable things. Of Ys, the city beneath the waters, and of the fishermen of Sein who ceremonially share wine and break bread with their Captain before a voyage, and of

long lost islands in the Western Ocean. Things of the sea.

But there was nothing legendary about the Venetes. Julius Cæsar, to whom the honour fell of perpetuating their memory by utterly destroying them, found them, in 56 B.C., a tough, two fisted, sea going lot, prone to rebellious independence and leadership—a leadership over neighbouring maritime peoples, including the Britons, founded upon their control of the sea. For "these Veneti"—the translation is Mr. H. J. Edwards's —"exercise by far the most extensive authority over all the sea coast in those districts, for they have numerous ships, in which it is their custom to sail to Britain, and they excel the rest in the theory and practice of navigation." And "as the sea is very boisterous and open, with but a few harbours here and there which they hold themselves, they have as tributaries almost all those whose custom is to sail that sea." A shipminded people, who understood the value of naval supremacy.

Numerous ships they possessed, "an unlimited supply," and great ships they were for that far off, forgotten day. Ships inferior to the Roman "only in speed and oarsmanship; in all other respects, having regard to the locality and the force of the tempests, the [Venetan ships] were more suitable and adaptable." Remarkably staunch, able ships, built right there on those Armorican beaches, with all the lore of that boisterous sea in their hulls. "Their keels," the Romans marvelled, "were considerably more flat than those of our own ships, that they might more easily weather shoals and ebbtide. Their prows were very lofty, and their sterns were similarly adapted to meet the force of waves and storms. The ships were made entirely of oak, to endure

any violence and buffeting. The cross pieces were beams a foot thick, fastened with iron nails as thick as a thumb. The anchors were attached by iron chains instead of cables. Skins and pieces of leather finely finished were used instead of sails . . . probably because they thought that the mighty ocean storms and hurricanes could not be ridden out, nor the mighty burden of their ships conveniently controlled, by means of sails."

The Romans "could not damage them with the ram, they were so stoutly built, nor, by reason of their height, was it easy to hurl a pike. . . . Moreover, when the wind began to rage and they ran before it, they endured the storm more easily, and rested in shoals more safely, with no fear of rocks or crags if left by the tide"—and one needs to have seen that swirling, treacherous coast in order to appreciate what Cæsar had in mind.

Great tall ships of oak, with beams a foot thick, built by seafaring men who knew their business. "About two hundred and twenty" of them, assembled in battle array. The fleet of the ocean going Venetes, in 56 B. C.

3

They had thought that they could defy Rome, those Venetan men of the sea, prone to rebellious independence. They had seized Roman legates collecting grain, they had summoned allies from the Loire river to the German Sea, they had told Crassus, the commander of the Seventh Legion on the Loire, just where he could head in. Crassus had started to build a fleet, preparing to head out, unacquainted with the maritime weather in those parts, and in the spring Cæsar was there.

They fought all summer, conducting hopeless land operations in that fortified archipelago of promontories and tide swept shoals. As fast as the Romans reduced one stronghold, constructing causeways and dykes, those great Venetan ships came sliding in and removed the defenders to another. Perhaps it was around Guérande and Le Croisic, among the salt marshes; but more probably it was the Morbihan promontories, Penlan, Penerf, Kercambre, Saint Gildas and the rest, that saw the struggle between the men of the sea and the legions from Rome.

But finally, towards the end of the summer, the Roman fleet came out, with the legions all watching from the heights. And "Brutus, who commanded the fleet, and his tribunes and centurions in charge of single ships, were by no means certain what to do or what plan of battle they were to pursue." There was nothing you could do to damage those great towering Venetan monsters. But the Roman David had thought of a trick for the giant. "Sharp pointed hooks let in and fastened to long poles. . . . When by these contrivances the halyards which fastened the yards to the masts were caught and drawn taut, the [Roman] ship was rowed hard ahead and they were snapped short." The yards came down, and the sails with them, and the Venetan ship was helpless, a mere fortress to be scaled. They fought all day, and at nightfall when some of them would have escaped down wind with remnants of rigging, "suddenly a calm so complete and absolute came on that they could not stir from the spot."

So they passed into history, the sea going Venetes, and the sword and the yoke of slavery claimed them, and their great ships were no more. But the Romans

did not forget, and carried the notion of them back to their own Mediterranean.

And Cæsar was free to go on across into Britain and to establish his naval base at Portus Itius, which is now Boulogne. Portus Itius where Caligula, a century or so later, was to build his famous lighthouse; a pyramid with twelve platforms, of alternating yellow and grey stone and brick, two hundred feet high, set on an octagonal, sixty-four foot wide, cement base. Boulogne's "Ancient Man" of later days, a landmark and beacon to mariners for sixteen hundred years, until its disintegration and final destruction in 1644.

CHAPTER II

SAILOR KINGS

1

Two great French kings, shipminded sailor kings for all their endless warfare on land—Philip IV, the Handsome, and Charles V, the Wise.

One must go back a little into history. It was in the opening years of the thirteenth century; Philip Augustus, battling King of France, was wresting Normandy from John of England; in 1202 he had pronounced the confiscation of the duchy. At sea, in the service of John, an amazing and terrifying personage swept the Channel, conquering Guernsey, raiding the French coast, destroying shipping.

Eustache the Monk, of Boulogne—Cæsar's Portus Itius, where Caligula's Ancient Man was beginning to show the passing of more than a thousand years. The Monk, because he had once been a Benedictine; later, his robe laid aside so that he might go forth and avenge the murder of his father; now, in 1205 or so, a piratical terror of the seas under the standard of England and Normandy. Terrifying to all good mariners, not only for his fantastic exploits—there was to be a ballad of twenty-three hundred verses about him—but because he was a sorcerer.

He performed magic. He possessed a charm which rendered him invulnerable. He knew how to make his ship invisible. Everyone in England and in Normandy knew that. He knew how to make his ship invisible, and invisible ships were not a part of the Laws, Judgements and Roll of Oléron, although what the "wise men" of Oléron Island proclaimed, in the Western Ocean off the coast of France, was the universal rule of the sea. A dreadful business. An additional peril for honest sailormen, this necromancing Monk, as though the boisterous seas were not enough, and wreckers, and false pilots, and the Hand of God, without the Devil getting his fingers into it too.

But the Devil continued getting his fingers into it, year after year, until one day for his sins the Pope excommunicated John, and there was an interdict against England. And the Devil who had once been a Monk bethought him of Mother Church. He forsook the impious John, and with many of his fellow corsairs—it was in 1212—entered the service of Philip Augustus. And if in England there had been any to doubt that Eustache was a fell and fiendish personage, now there were none.

But Philip Augustus had no time, and probably no inclination, for supernatural misgivings. He had other business afoot, requiring the welcome assistance of the Monk. A great fleet of seventeen hundred ships gathered together in 1213, at Dam, in Flanders, for the invasion of England. And half the ships or more were burned, but the attacking English were defeated on land, and in 1214 the King was at Bouvines, that great battlefield, again smashing the English and their allies. And now in England they were weary of their excommunicated John and his crimes; they were sending

over to France and offering the English crown to the King's son, Louis; and in 1216 Eustache the Monk was assuring the crossing to England of French soldiery in eight hundred vessels, and in his own ship, no doubt amply visible for the occasion, transporting Louis and his notables, and Langton, Archbishop of York—and no necromancing in the presence of the prelate.

The Monk held the Channel; his ships were everywhere, strange contraptions of his own devising, some of them, great floating castles built on galleys; communications were maintained. But the death of John brought a change of heart in England, and the nobles began to turn against Louis, King of England and Dauphin of France. In August, 1217, the Monk was sailing from Calais with men and supplies in seventy small vessels and ten ships of war. At Dover, the Governor was saying that "if those people land, England is lost." They went out to meet him, off the mouth of the Thames, with eighteen ships and a score of barques.

The Monk's last fight, the Battle of the Five Islands. A terrific affair, decided with arrows and quicklime. Eustache, overloaded with men and horses, was boarded by four ships and went to his death swinging a heavy oar, very murderously. They got their hands on him, finally, some of his former companions, and beheaded him on the spot. He was *not* invisible, he was *not* invulnerable, his magic was useless because Saint Bartholomew had destroyed his charm. They put his head on a pike and carried it to Canterbury, in proof of these reassuring circumstances.

The Monk was gone, and his ships, and Louis could no longer remain in England. He returned to France,

soon after to become Louis VIII—and for long days in the countrysides they were still singing the ballad of Eustache le Moine, of Boulogne.

2

The first half of the thirteenth century passed, in an unceasing naval commotion between France and England. Raids from Normandy, raids from Poitou, raids from Brittany. In 1243, the English Cinque Ports were complaining of "irreparable" losses at the hands of Calais; of Breton and Poitevin corsairs in ambush along the trade routes; of Normandy seamen who rendered fishing impossible; of a king, Henry, practically blockaded in Bordeaux; of the inability of the entire English naval force to cope with the enemy. And in 1259, Normandy, Poitou and Anjou were France's by treaty, with the English still in Guyenne.

And now a great rivalry boiling up between the merchant fleets of Normandy and Aquitaine; a great hostility between the Norman seamen, and their Breton and Flemish colleagues, and the mariners of English Bordeaux and Bayonne—the Bordelese and the Basques; very enterprising fellows, the latter; very active commercially at La Rochelle, the great meeting place of merchants from the Levant and Ponant; very active, as well, throughout the North; very much concerned with fishery; and in 1279 a company of them securing an emplacement for the drying of fish on Saint Matthieu Point, in Brittany. To the great indignation and disgruntlement of the Bretons. These Southerners from Bayonne in their fish yard near Brest.

Years of bickering, then, and raids and reprisals. Le Conquet burned in 1289, but the Southerners still

in their fish yard. Renewed raids and reprisals, and everyone taking sides; Normandy and Flanders with the Bretons, the English with the Southerners. In 1292, finally, a sailors' brawl to precipitate events. A brawl at a fountain near Saint Matthieu Point; a Bayonnese and a Norman mixing it up with briny words, and the Norman wounded. A rush of Normans to attack the Bayonne ships.

Later, the Norman ships, eighty or so, went on down to Bordeaux for the customary loading of wine cargoes. The Bayonne ships were there, and everything was quiet. In groups of four or five the Southern ships set sail, leaving the Normans to finish their loading. Then these too sailed—and suddenly up went the fighting castles fore and aft, and Normandy was loose on the seas. Bayonne prizes all along the coast; a batch of twenty here, a score or more there, twenty-two hapless Irish vessels fallen in the trap; violence, and terror, and fearful atrocities. It was not a pretty age.

There was a new king in France, Philip IV, the Handsome, and he was very angry—officially. Privately, he was not at all displeased, and seems to have approved his boisterous Normans. They had not been his for so very long, there were still many bonds uniting French Normandy and Norman England, and it was his inevitable and necessary policy to encourage any circumstance which might serve to diminish and destroy that sympathy, to estrange the two branches of the Norman family, and to confirm Normandy more and more in its new allegiance to France. And this feud between his French Normans and the Southerners of English Bayonne was just such a circumstance. Norman against Southerner, a private quarrel of local prides

and commercial interests; but behind the Bayonnese, siding with them, stood England. So that in the end it was Norman against Norman, which was what Philip wanted.

At all events, the fracas continued, and no interference from Philip. Norman merchants slaughtered and mutilated at Bordeaux—English Bordeaux, and Philip must have smiled—English and Bayonnese mariners paraded through pleasant little Norman ports with infinite cruelties and unspeakable indignities, after the custom of the day. And in 1293 there was a Bayonne fleet in the Channel, and an English fleet coming up from Bordeaux. Three hundred strong, in three divisions, the Norman ships went forth; the van into the Western Ocean, the centre off Saint Matthieu Point, the rear guard for the Channel. When the smoke had drifted away, and there was no one left to kill, nine Bayonne ships were burned—twenty others had just squeezed out of Saint Malo in time—and twenty English were captured, to the tune of twenty thousand pounds.

There is a legend that the English Cinque Ports promptly challenged their cousins of Normandy, and that a vessel was anchored on the high seas to mark the appointed scene of battle, but these niceties do not actually appear to have been observed. The Cinque Ports fleet simply came boiling out, seventy-four stout ships looking for the Normans off Saint Matthieu Point, and the Norman ships, some two hundred of them, in due time appeared. And in a heavy storm they fought like cats, terrifically, Norman against Norman, and it was not Normandy's day. It was said afterwards that fifteen thousand Normandy seamen had perished.

And in spite of that it may be that Philip smiled. Norman against Norman.

3

Actually, Philip was excessively annoyed.

A ruler of great energy and decision, he was already having arguments with Edward of England over the disturbed state of maritime affairs. Now, after Saint Matthieu, with English shipping raiding the Brittany coast, he determined on war with England.

And the first among the kings of his day on either side of the Channel to do so, he understood that he must have a navy. Not merely collections of local ships assembled for a given occasion, and too readily dispersed; not simply contingents of civilian vessels pressed into service, without discipline or coordination; not only private armaments, such as the English Cinque Ports fleet, temporarily, and so often reluctantly, placed at the royal disposal—he had seen the disastrous results of such uncertain arrangements in his father's day, during the wars with Aragon—but a navy, a permanent national establishment, the King's navy.

He believed in ships, this first of the sailor kings, and gave them a large share of his meticulous attention and thought, of his acutely active intelligence. Already it had occurred to him that galleys from the Mediterranean, manned by men who had seen service against Aragon, could be of use in the Channel. In 1292 he had ordered twenty large galleys from Genoa. Delivered in 1294, they were taken to Marseille, where others from that port and from Narbonne were added to the squadron; thirty-five galleys, for His Majesty the King of France, commanded by Guillaume de Mar, the Captain

of Aigues-Mortes—crusading Saint Louis's square white fortress by the sea—supplied with Genoese crews and masters from Provence. And in April, 1295, they were to sail, and to reach Normandy two months later, the first fleet of Mediterranean war galleys to undertake such a journey.

But in 1293 the galleys had not been built, and Philip wishing for a navy did not possess a single royal ship to his name. Not a ship, not an arsenal, not a scrap of materiel, not a squad of trained men, not a particle of nautical routine. Not of his own, to carry his royal crest and belong to the King, who was France. But he wished it, because he understood the grave necessity for it, and that was enough. He had mariners, those boisterous Normans to begin with, who could be trained; there were shrewd maritime fellows in the South who could be acquired; he had artisans who could be taught; he had forests, and rivers, and harbours; what he did not possess he could create. It was a new idea; a new conception of naval administration—a new extravagance some would certainly call it—and on the face of it an impossible task. But he dreamed ships, royal ships, this sailor king, and *le Roi le veult!*

In a year he had done it.

4

The fall of 1293, and a swarm of Genoese, the King's Genoese, in France, at Rouen on the Seine river. All very busy, organizing something on the left bank opposite the town, at the end of the bridge in the Richebourg suburb—always a quarter devoted to sailors and to the building of ships.

Enrico Marchese, Lanfranc Tartaro, Huguet and

Albertino Spinola, Nicolas du Parraz—many others, no doubt, experts in their various crafts—and troops of workmen, carpenters, riggers, caulkers, shrewd artisans in all matters pertaining to ships, inheritors of a more ancient and more skilfully developed marine tradition than that of the ruder North; from Genoa and Provence, from the shores of the Southern Sea, mother of oceans.

With them, very soon inevitably, a stream of foreigners from the South, from Italy, from Provence and Languedoc; mariners, craftsmen of all kinds, merchants, shipowners, scientists, artists and writers—Egidio Colonna, for instance, Roman Giles, bringing his celebrated works on naval tactics for Philip to absorb and incorporate into the routine of France—all of them come to see what it was that the sailor king of France was doing; come to seek new fields for their activity, to found new homes, many of them, in smiling Normandy; come to furnish the quickening counsel of their different knowledge and experience.

A great palaver all the time at Rouen, North and West, South and East, the Ponant and the Levant, meeting and exchanging; new words, new thoughts, new ways of doing things, taking root and flourishing; new arts, and trades, and manners; a new maritime language, new methods and new cultures, blossoming in the North. Men who swore by the ancient navigation Laws of Oléron, model for Whitby and Westcappelle—Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen of France, had had them codified a century before; all the wisdom of the "prud'-hommes" of Oléron concerning the going down of men to the sea in ships, accumulated within the borders of that Atlantic island meeting place and refuge for the

great wine commerce of the Middle Ages—learning from other men for whom the Mediterranean Consulate of the Sea had always been the rule.

A fine clashing of intellectual convictions, of manual and mechanical habits; a fine display of unsuspected beauties and refinements; all radiating from the shipyard of Philip the King.

5

For that was what Marchese and his colleagues were doing, organizing a shipyard, an arsenal—the old word was *dorsenal,* from the Arab *Daar Sanaa,* the House of the Works—an arsenal patterned after the one founded at Seville some forty years before. And in March, 1294—anniversary, so to speak, of the French navy—it was ready.

The Galley Enclosure of Rouen.

A walled and moated enclosure; a canal, the Great Ditch, entering the enclosure through a lock, widening into a careening basin, the Pond, and rejoining the river through another lock at the further side; a great interior court lined with buildings of wood and plaster—the Master's manor; a work shed for gear; storehouses for supplies, the "garnishing houses"; *halles,* covered slips serving for the construction and storage of galleys, seventeen at a time. All varieties of supplies, including the peas, beans and wine which the King must furnish to the galley crews, according to the Consulate of the Sea; sailors brought up from the South, and no impressment of Normandy seamen, no interference with the local merchant marine.

Ships of war building. Smooth sided Levant galleys and *galiotes,* looked after by the Southerners; Nor-

mandy barges, *barjots* and *flambarts,* clinker built vessels handled by Norman carpenters and "clinkerers" —the long Scandinavian *nef,* but larger, decked, cabined and hugely castled fore and stern; the coming fighting type of the fourteenth century, charterable in times of peace to private enterprise.

In 1295, already, fifty galleys in commission; some of them extremely beautiful, such as the three masted *Richesse* all encrusted with mother of pearl. And Philip buying seventy or eighty merchantmen for transports, from Spain and Portugal, from Flanders, from the Hanseatic League—and the two hundred odd Normandy merchant ships still untouched. Eight thousand sailors there from Italy and Provence. Two great lords jointly installed as Conductors, reporting to Philip in person, each with his squadron and his flagship with chaplains, and banners, and trumpeters; and for Captains of the galleys, Marchese and Guillaume de Mar—very busy right away burning Dover.

The thing was done. The sailor king had a navy, the foundations of a navy; his own royal ships in his own royal Enclosure—and everyone very well contented except perhaps at Siena, where the royal bankers were having the devil's own time devising new levies and taxes to defray an expenditure of a million and a half *livres.* But with energetic, persistent Philip at their elbows, they too found a way.

6

The English war was on, and Philip, calling in his Flemish vassal allies, organized his Continental Blockade of England. No trading with England, and to enforce the interdict, more fleets to supplement his own

infant armament; fleets from Saint Malo and Brittany; from Scandinavia, two hundred galleys, one hundred great ships and fifty thousand men to serve every year for four months. All this afloat in 1296, under Michel du Mans, the Bayonnese, sweeping the North Sea, constraining Edward I of England to keep his convoys at home. An "Admiral of the Fleet of France" now, for the first time in the Ponant, and at his death Marchese put in charge of the ocean squadron and Nicolas du Parraz commanding in the Channel. Both of them active as hornets, the blockade maintained, English shipping at a standstill. For, as they said in France, "our Lord the King has entirely disarmed the sea."

But the Flemish had to have wool from England for their industries. In 1297 the blockade was broken, and Edward I was taking a fleet over to Flanders—a crossing enlivened by a terrific private battle between the Cinque Ports and Yarmouth contingents, twenty-five of the Yarmouth ships being burned, finally, by their Cinque Ports colleagues. With Zaccaria, Grand Admiral of Castile, in command of Philip's navy—they called him Admiral General of the King—the Channel and the North Sea were continuously filled with ships and the clamour of warfare, while down at Bordeaux Michel du Mans—the tradition exists that the great Wallace of Scotland served under him—was watching the river. Later, following a period of truces, in 1301 after the departure of Zaccaria to lead Genoa against the Saracens, Michel in his place as Admiral.

They sent him to Flanders, to push on the war, and in 1302 he was at the castle of Maele, near Bruges, guarding supplies for the French forces. And sud-

denly in Bruges the Flemish were up, and massacring the French. At Maele, with a garrison of seventeen men, Michel saw himself attacked by thousands of rebels. He died there, beheaded, after several furious hours of hopeless resistance, without the comfort of a ship under his feet at the end. Michel du Mans, the Bayonnese, Admiral General of France.

It was a dark time for Philip, revolts and defeats—but in 1304 he was preparing something for his Flemish trouble makers. The whole of Flanders in rebellion and fifteen thousand Flemish besieging the Count of Holland, ally of France, at Zieriksee. But Philip was preparing. Galleys at Rouen, in the Enclosure; at Calais, transports and supplies for seventy thousand men; in July, the royal galleys aiding in the capture of Gravelines, led by another of Philip's Genoese Admirals of France, bellowing Grimaldi of the great voice. And in August they were headed for Zieriksee.

Grimaldi had eleven galleys, eight ships from Galicia, and thirty from Normandy assembled by a Calais shipowner called Pédrogue, who was styled Sovereign of the Ships. Ashore, the Count of Holland's son, William, had gathered together ten thousand men to relieve his father. These Grimaldi took aboard and carried up the Scheldt, a few Dutch ships joining him on the way. With flares at the mastheads to warn the besieged, they approached Zieriksee, to find the place dammed up and the Flemish fleet on guard—some contemporaries said five hundred ships and eighty thousand men; actually, perhaps, eighty ships and some eight thousand men, against Grimaldi's forty-four ships and eleven galleys, commanded by

Guy de Namur, young, elegant, popular prince, and never defeated.

In four lines the French drew themselves up; William of Holland and Pédrogue in the van, with fifteen *nefs;* fifteen more in the second line; fourteen more in the third; in the fourth, in reserve, Grimaldi and the galleys. With his own great ships in front, Guy led the attack at noon, and according to the chronicle—

Sous Ciricé dans la rivière
Fut l'œuvre espoventable et fière . . .

The terrifying and tremendous business in the river before Zieriksee.

At the extreme right of his line Pédrogue with four ships had gone forward to meet the attack—gone forward to find himself aground in a falling tide. Hard pressed now on all sides, while the arrows "hum like swarming bees." Behind him the other French *nefs* have followed, compactly massed in three lines, joined to each other by cables. You can step from ship to ship, but wherever you step you must fight, because Grimaldi has had all small boats removed. Fight or drown.

And the Flemish are sending down fire ships, but the wind changes and drives them back, and with the turn of the tide Pédrogue is afloat again. Afloat and very busy, crashing into the tumult, attacking the *Orgueilleuse* of Bruges. She carries trumpeters with silver trumpets, but she fights with every missile that will fling, iron, and stone, and brick. Pédrogue is aboard of her, while *Jehannète* makes fast on her

further side, and at nightfall she is taken, with her silver trumpets. But on the left Guy with seven large *nefs* has been battering three Galician ships to pieces, until the crews have to leap for their lives to other vessels. A terrifying and tremendous business, in the river before Zieriksee.

Midnight—they have been fighting since noon—and Pédrogue lets loose two blazing *nefs* against the enemy. The flames light up a scene of endless confusion, battle lines broken and scattered, the Flemish ships all disarrayed. Guy has sent for more men, two hours before the dawn, and on shore they can hear the frightful commotion of arms, the din and lament of wounded and dying. And now, in the dark, Grimaldi's swift galleys are moving. Their time has come, and the Admiral sends them in, for the King. Through the dark they come swinging, backs bent over the oars; one Flemish *nef* after another is taken—but here is Guy again with his ships under sail, falling on Grimaldi, concentrating on the admiral galley, driving him to extremities if some French *nefs* had not joined the clamour just in time. Grimaldi is clear, the dawn has come.

And the battle went on.

No reprieve, no quarter, slaughter and sweat. At long last they had Guy surrounded, four galleys on top of him and no surrender. He had never known defeat. But to escape with his life, finally, he took refuge aboard Grimaldi's galley, and the Flemish disaster was complete. Five thousand men perished, the great fleet destroyed, the siege at an end.

The terrifying and tremendous business in the river before Zieriksee—a smashing victory against odds for

the young navy of Philip the King, founder of arsenals, builder of ships.

7

He died, and lesser men who followed were not so energetic, not so far seeing, not so shipminded.

Still, in the midst of almost constant hostilities the Normandy ports continued extremely prosperous. In the 1330s, at the eve of the Hundred Years' War, there were some fifty royal galleys, barges and *nefs* in commission, behind the banner of the Admiral, Quiéret—a good organizer and administrator, author of Ordinations which were the first naval code of rules and found their way into the English Black Book—assisted by commanders such as Bahuchet, and the mercenary Genoese contingents under Carlo Grimaldi and Antonio Doria. An unsatisfactory lot, often, these mercenaries, but Normandy shipowners were none too prone to lend their lucrative vessels to the Crown. The old trouble, which Edward of England too was experiencing with his Cinque Ports, and starting to remedy. Too much dependence again in France on local levies and hired fleets, at a time when the English King was beginning to develop a maritime establishment.

A royal *navire*—so they called the navy in France—centred of course at Rouen, distributed along the coast; at Boulogne and Abbeville where there were now little arsenals; at Etaples, at Dieppe, at Caen, at Honfleur; at Leure which was to become a part of the modern port of Havre; at Harfleur, called Port of the Galleys, branch arsenal for the fleet, home anchorage of the transports, the royal *nefs* and *coques*, "round ships" too deep for the river. All dependent upon the

Enclosure at Rouen, where Thomas Fouques, at three hundred gold francs a year, was Master and Keeper of the Works and Repairs of the King's Navy, of his Galley Enclosure, Armaments and Artillery for the Business of the Sea. Seconded by the Master Diggers, the Sergeants at Arms of the King, the Master Carpenters of the Navies of the King in his Galley Enclosure, the Masters of the King's Garnishings, of his Navy and Army of the Sea.

And in 1338 and 1339, subject to heavy reprisals, one learns from Froissart concerning Quiéret and Bahuchet, that "these, frequently sailing near the coast of Sandwich, Rye, Winchelsea and Dover, did great damage and caused much terror to the English." Then 1340, Edward III of England claiming the crown of France as grandson of Philip the Handsome, preparing to cross with a fleet to Flanders. To Sluys.

8

Sluys.

A battle "fierce, murderous and horrible," to make Philip IV, the Handsome, turn in his grave.

But it was Philip VI who was King. And with Edward crossing to Flanders, he set forth his royal *navire,* and prevailed upon Normandy to take the place of the mercenaries, except for three Genoese galleys under Barbavera, and complete his Grand Army of the Sea. The flower of all the Normandy ports in one hundred and fifty vessels of their own; two hundred odd ships all told, with the royal galleys, barges and *nefs,* and twenty thousand men; Quiéret, and Bahuchet, and Vice Admiral Hélie in command; and orders, fatal orders, to block the way to Bruges at Sluys. A trap

without issue, a blind alley among the dykes, and a hostile shore all about. There was Edward arriving, two hundred and fifty ships and twelve thousand archers, and Barbavera begging the Admirals to deploy on the open sea—going out himself with his galleys—but Bahuchet was opposed. The *navire* would remain in three lines, with sails furled, joined together with cables. A barrier, a breastwork of immobile ships. So little did they understand, those desperately courageous, soldierly Admirals.

The men from the Seine, Rouen, Harfleur, Honfleur, Leure, in the van; those from Picardy and Dieppe in the centre; those from the Cotentin and Caen in the rear. In that order they were, almost all of them, to perish, the flower of Normandy's seamen.

Edward came on, manœuvring with the wind and the tide, in two lines, the big ships in front, one full of men at arms between every two full of archers. In the distance, well guarded, lay a vessel carrying the Queen's ladies—hapless ladies, insufficiently guarded, for they too were to perish, pale, surprised flowers in towering headdresses. Edward came on, with four great vessels to attack Quiéret's outpost of four; the *Saint Denis,* the *Saint Nicolas,* the *Christophe*—lately the *Christopher* of England—and the *Saint Georges,* arsenal of the fleet, loaded with men and munitions, bearing the Admirals. Ship to ship they crashed and boarded, and the whole French front line was in action, the *Christophe* taken; a fury of battle around Edward's ship, with the gilded crown flashing at the masthead and the King all in white leather in the thick of it; all at once Edward wounded by Bahuchet; all at once Bahuchet taken, Bahuchet hanged then and there

to the mast; Quiéret mortally wounded, Quiéret beheaded, some say, on the deck.

Eight hours of it, and all four French advanced ships had been taken, the first line smashed, hemmed in and annihilated—Rouen and Harfleur, Honfleur and Leure—the second line shattered, two thousand men drowned—but Dieppe were hanging on, rammed up against the third line, holding their ships, fighting like wolves under Quiefdeville and their barge masters. The barge masters of the navy. The sun went down, and on the English decks men were glad to pause, spent from the fray. And suddenly, in the dark, behind the French rear, shadows in the shadows, darting shadows along the shore, swarming shadows on the water—the Flemish, eight thousand Flemish, attacking from behind.

The bloody business was finished, ten thousand English dead, fifteen thousand French. But not quite finished. The barge masters were going home—the royal galleys, the royal barges from Dieppe, here and there with them, inspired by the navy's vim, a private vessel or two—some thirty ships or so, glorious maniacs, they hacked their way through the English and out to sea. And for good measure there was Captain Avestoize, in the *Saint James* of Dieppe, engaging an English *nef,* fighting them off on all sides throughout the night, and perishing in the morning sun with four hundred dead on deck. The King's navy.

The dark years were at hand. Soon it was Crécy, then Calais, then Poitiers. Then the peace, at Brétigny, in 1360. All of the Southwest, all of the North, Calais, to England. So little left of Philip the Handsome's France. But one thing was left, always—

throughout the siege of Calais, throughout the disastrous years—the captains and barge masters, the seamen of Dieppe. There was no money any more, no men to be had, but in Dieppe there was always courage and devotion, and the last of the King's ships kept in action, and a sailor tradition kept shining. The King's navy.

And another sailor king coming.

9

Charles, fifth of his name—the Wise they were to call him, after his accession in 1364.

A shrewd builder of alliances which brought him fleets from Spain and Portugal, he, and his Captains on land and water, had so contrived matters that when the peace of Brétigny was broken, as he had hoped and believed that it would be, the English found themselves imprisoned in France; at sea, in spite of severe reprisals, Grimaldi and other mercenaries attached to France were again raiding the English coast; in 1372 an allied Spanish fleet manned with French crews was smashing the English off La Rochelle, capturing the Earl of Pembroke. And when, in 1375, Grimaldi was taken prisoner, and his fleet scattered, Charles was still able to secure a willing truce from a weary Edward of England. Able to see that the land was cleared of English except at Bayonne, Bordeaux and Calais.

Able, and intelligent and resourceful enough, to turn his mind to the neglected *navire* of France, to the rehabilitation of the royal fleet, and to the building of ships. Because for such affairs he had "very great affection," this second of the sailor kings.

And for one thing he got rid of his Levant

squadron, the better to concentrate his effort on the Channel. Charles had five galleys down there in the Mediterranean, the naval station of "the lands of Languedoc," commanded by Etienne de Brandiz, Master Visitor of the Ports and Passages of the Seneschalcy of Carcassonne. And in 1370, when the Pope was wishing to proceed from Rome to Avignon—and when it was advisable for France to cut a suitable figure in the great marine escort of some sixty galleys assembled at Corneto from Naples, Catalonia and Provence—this Brandiz through his energy and financial ingenuity had produced and equipped ten superb galleys in time to represent the Most Christian realm.

For that, in 1373, they made him Master of the Galley Enclosure at Rouen—the arsenal had been maintained, somehow, throughout the days of national confusion after Poitiers, although in very run down condition—but the energetic Master Visitor of the Ports and Passages of the Seneschalcy of Carcassonne showed himself peculiarly incompetent and lazy at Rouen, and in 1375 he was dismissed from the northern post, in 1376, for insubordination, from his southern galley command as well. He departed—taking the galleys with him, to Marseille, there to place them in the Pope's service. Charles, who was the Wise, did nothing about it, and when the moment came to transport the Pope from Marseille to Rome, France was again ostensibly and ostentatiously represented by four galleys—Brandiz's purloined galleys, outfitted at *his* expense. But there was no end to the galley nuisance. Brandiz lost two on that stormy papal voyage; he sent the others on various fortuitous missions, and continued to defraud the King in numberless ways; and in 1379

Charles disposed of the whole squadron to another Pope.

He would concentrate on the Channel; he had already for some time been concentrating on the Channel, and on the Enclosure at Rouen. A strong *navire* again, properly equipped and maintained; a complete reorganization of the navy to keep step with the military and civil ameliorations which Charles was instigating in a kingdom only very slowly convalescing from great wars and private strifes.

And for the Enclosure and the navy it took all of his precarious energy—he was not robust physically—all of his personal leadership, all of his astute, patient ingenuity. Upheld by his warm and unfailing "affection" for things of the sea. He came to Rouen frequently; he visited his vessels building in the Enclosure two and three times a week; with Grimaldi, in 1369 already, he was reviewing the fleet, in the presence of the royal princes, of the nobles, of the representatives of his good cities; on other occasions in the company of deputies from the States General, conducting them, eager for them to see, and be impressed, and take an interest in his royal task—in order to show them what it was all about, how fine it was and how worthy, to make them shipminded, to persuade a little money from their so very parsimonious pouches for his precious ships.

A pathetic figure, this time; so handicapped in his high endeavour, the country gone to wrack behind him and the treasury in ruin; so different from masterful Handsome Philip with his Siennese bankers. Pathetic, and wholly admirable.

And in the early 1370s the Enclosure was coming

into its own once more; ships building there in 1372 for the expedition of Owen, Prince of Wales, against Guernsey; a great and increasing activity all the time in support of continued French maritime enterprises to which one must return for a moment on a later page; the Master spending some six thousand *louis* in 1376, for the construction of four barges and repairs and fittings for twelve others; the whole place clanking with work in 1379; the Enclosure become one of the foremost arsenals in Europe—sometimes as many as eleven ships on the ways at once—with Honfleur and Harfleur, the "sovereign port of Normandy," serving as outer harbours and bases. A monument to the wise King's manifold industry, the reward for his pains and the justification of his dreams.

A special date during those years—1373, and the King's signature to a new and very noteworthy Ordinance governing the Enclosure, perhaps the first Act of its kind in the kingdom; and for the ships, for merchant ships and fighting ships, for fishermen and for all mariners and seamen, a new authority, the Admiralty; established with all its rights, duties, prerogatives and perquisites, such as to make of the possessor of the admiralcy one of the richest and most powerful officials in the State, controlling for the King, and with his own independent tribunals, his own banners, trumpeters and apparel, every last thing to do with the sea, from the gathering of seaweed to the fighting of battles.

And as Admiral of France and Captain of Honfleur—the first Admiral of France under the new decree—a very great man indeed; worthy of his King and of his great military contemporary, Du Guesclin,

the Breton; a soldier, crusader and sailor—Jean de Vienne, Lord of Coucy.

10

The Good Admiral they called him in his own day, and it will be well at all times to salute his great name and do honour to his excellent memory. A short, thin man, reserved and intensely religious; a man of soul and intellect, the cherished friend of all the best ones of his age; a dreamer, reflective and modest, a generous espouser of all lofty causes; and in action valorous, tireless, unceasingly faithful, warrior and sailor for forty years of his life, prudent in council and wise in diplomacy.

He was born in 1341, the nephew of that other splendid Jean de Vienne, battling Governor of Calais during the forlorn siege. From his early twenties he was soldiering, on sea and land, crusading to Constantinople, commanding detachments in the Hundred Years' War, fighting the English under Du Guesclin, making his chivalrous name and constantly enriching a reputation which was to resound across Christendom. And in 1373, in his thirties, Admiral of France and Captain of Honfleur—and at his side, for he knew good men, another modest, thoughtful, able worker, Du Moustier the Vice Admiral; and as Master of the Enclosure, after they got rid of Brandiz, the admirably loyal and energetic Aubertin Staucon.

They began at once to push things, the three of them —and Richard de Brumare to help at the Enclosure— with the English truce in 1375 to give them a little time; and when there was no public money the Admiral paid for things out of his own pocket, for the fortifications

at Honfleur for instance, and Staucon too, quietly reaching down for his workmen's wages. The Master at Rouen, the Admiral in residence at Honfleur—and always the King at their elbows—pushing, drilling, organizing, supervising all the work in Normandy, executing the Admiral's policy of constant eventual maritime warfare with small, swift units. In 1377 they had thirty-five big *nefs* at sea, and perhaps ninety lesser vessels, manned by five thousand trained soldiers and seamen; and with them Admiral Sanchez and his eight Castilian galleys. The King's new *navire*—and in England a lack of merchant shipping even, after the long wars, and all vessels confined to port because of the French naval menace.

And on the day the truce expired, on June 25, 1377, they were out; the Admiral, the Vice Admiral, Grimaldi, Sanchez, out from Harfleur, across the Channel. On June 29 they were taking Rye and burning it; they were destroying Lewes; in July Folkestone, and Portsmouth, and Dartmouth, Plymouth, Hastings and Yarmouth; all up and down the English coast, exchanging terror and torch for ransom, and in August home with the booty. And in August right out again; the Isle of Wight, Pool, Winchelsea, Hastings, and all England to arms, trembling for Southampton and Dover. But the Admiral was not risking general engagements with his young navy; he was at Calais, supporting the French siege, and then it was winter.

1378, and the Admiral at sea almost continuously from June to December—he fought on land during the bad seasons—smashing an English fleet of some hundred merchant vessels off Cherbourg in July; sweeping the Channel at will for two months after that;

then, when they came after him with another large requisitioned fleet and made laborious siege of Saint Malo, slipping across behind their backs and raiding the Cornish coast. Raiding again all through 1379, while tempests shattered the dwindling remnants of English naval power. Attacking the Channel Islands in 1380; placing them for a time under the French crown, or at least Jersey—the episode is traditional, denied by English chroniclers, supported by Island records corroborated by the chronology of certain contemporary documents which it is not the province of these pages to elaborate. Raiding the English coast again all through that summer; skirmishing unsuccessfully off Ireland and a report in England that the Admiral was taken. But the Admiral was not taken; he was destroying Portsmouth and Hastings; he was at home, then out again, entering the Thames, burning Gravesend, terrifying London.

Four years of this, with the Admiral of France cock of the walk at sea; English armies stranded in France, English shipping at a standstill, and a great economic distress enervating the English people; in Normandy, on the other hand, a magnificent maritime prosperity, merchantmen swarming in every direction, upon their own private and extremely lucrative adventures—because the King had a navy of his own and a man to lead it, royal ships performing the royal business and no interference with Normandy shipowners, no levies and no borrowed bottoms withheld from commerce. A very fine state of affairs, praises be to the Good Admiral, and to his master the King, Charles the Wise.

And then in the midst of it all, in that same year of 1380, and quite young yet—he was only forty-three—

Charles died. Perhaps when the heralds came, at Rouen in the Enclosure, at Honfleur, along the Normandy waterfronts, upon the ships at sea, perhaps they understood what it was to mean, the passing of the second sailor king.

11

The new King was not twelve years old—the sixth Charles—his regent uncles were a sorry, scheming lot, playing peace and economy now to catch the popular favour. For the people were weary of taxes, weary of subsidies—one must recall the background of all these years, the Hundred Years' warfare, the incredible misery in its wake, for all the recently prosperous Normandy shipping—and on his deathbed Charles V himself had been obliged to abolish the financial aids for the war. For the war, and consequently for the navy. Riots and upheavals, right there in Rouen—they had a local grudge too against the Castilian galley sailors —when the Admiral attempted to procure funds; and when by chance funds were voted, the people repudiated them; and when the financial aids for the war had to be restored, in 1382, Paris and Rouen were immediately in revolt.

No more money—and under such conditions they had to try and maintain the Enclosure. A hopeless effort, and in two years forty ships of war had disappeared, falling apart in the arsenal; barges were being given away or stolen; privateer shipowners were brazenly appropriating the materiel of State; former royal sailing masters, some of them, who at a later day were very graciously to lend to a King of France ships originally built by another. Chaos and thievery—so soon after the

sailor king's death—but the Admiral kept things going as best he could, fighting on land and sea, and in 1385 there was suddenly stirring business afoot once more. Maritime business.

Insane business, partly, as will later appear, but all very fine and stirring. An invasion of England, grandiose conception of a boy King indulging in juvenile pageantry, and of his royal uncles who had ceased to be either pacifist or economical. An invasion of England; an expedition assembling at Sluys, transported from the mouth of the Seine; the Admiral there with four big *nefs* painted red, bearing his crest; an English fleet in the offing, retiring to defend London; the Admiral at sea with an invading force, landing in Scotland, crossing the English border, parading rather aimlessly, but to the intense disturbance of the English, back and forth with his prudent Scottish allies until his return to France in December.

And meanwhile, at Sluys, continued preparations, and subscriptions of money—money, actually, for the fleet—from the nobles, from the clergy, from the burghers, from rich and poor. Preparations and delays. August come and August passed, because Ghent had rebelled, the Flemish—always the Flemish, thousands of them—at Dam, threatening the French flank. Operations against the Flemish, then, and bad weather setting in. September, and the invasion disbanded. The invasion returning home, stormily, in detachments, and the detachments very badly mauled by the Captain of Calais, dashing out from his harbour. Clisson with two ships fighting a superb engagement with Calais for five hours, while forty other vessels clawed their way back to a Normandy port.

In 1386, pending the termination of a short truce, the royal youngster was at it again. Another "grand passage" to England; another large popular subscription—one marvels to hear it—ten thousand men and horses, a vast quantity of supplies, and the King and his uncles to be transported by the Admiral and Clisson in two expeditions, one from Normandy by way of Sluys, the other from Brittany. Some fourteen hundred ships at Sluys in September; ships from every port in Europe, from Prussia to Spain; so many ships, they said, that you could have walked as upon a bridge from Sluys to England; and during the crossing, the Sacrament to be displayed aboard, as on crusade. A tremendous activity all this time at the Enclosure, where Master Jean Choque—when he was not supervising the building by Guido of a magnificent vessel, ornamented with paintings worth two thousand gold francs, for Guy de la Trémoille—was attending to the construction of portions of "a closed town to be erected in England." A huge collapsible affair of wood which they had started the year before; a rampart twenty feet high, nine thousand paces around, to enclose a complete town. And seventy-two transports to carry it.

All this at Sluys, finally, very gaudy and gay, gilded masts and embroidered sails and banners, and a great show of glittering weapons and liveries, a martial din of sennets and flourishes—and the Boy who was France all agog at the sight, all delight, all mustard and spice, and "do greatly please me these sea matters."

But Uncle Jean, Duke of Berry, John the Magnificent who was to command, did not come—some say purposely, because he disapproved—delays took the place of delays, and in any case the King was exactly

observing his truce; in October, when the Duke did arrive, the good winds changed, bringing gales and terrific rains, ruining supplies, smashing ships. The King still insisted on sailing, and with his uncles they tried it, but after battling their way for two miles they were forced to return. The uncles said No; the ships dispersed; and the collapsible town was given to the Duke of Burgundy, to house workmen at Sluys.

A third time, in 1387, the Admiral and Clisson were willing to attempt it, leaving the King, for one, behind. But the Duke of Brittany seized Clisson, and afterwards, in 1392, sought to have him murdered, in answer to which the King led an expedition into Brittany—there was truce again since 1389 for ten years with England—and there at last the truth became manifest, the reason, perhaps, for much of this earlier boyish exuberance and maritime extravagance. For one day in the dark Brittany woods a very old man rushed out and clutched the King's bridle, warning him of betrayal; a little later, disturbed by this apparition, he was frightened by the sound of a lance ringing on armour; he seized his sword, bellowing at one of his uncles, and with difficulty they overpowered him and took him away.

For the King was temporarily insane—Charles VI, the Mad.

12

The sailor king was gone, but the Good Admiral was still there, and one may not so abruptly take leave of him, or fail to attend him to his end.

There was truce with England; the navy was again forgotten; money was no longer to be had; the King was crazy; throughout the land a great restlessness pre-

vailed, restlessness of soul, restlessness of body; a spiritual necessity for movement, for excitement, for distant adventure, for any romantic, generous, engrossing enterprise. The Turks, for instance, there were always the Turks to combat, to crusade against. And in 1396, for the relief of Manuel, Emperor of Constantinople, Sigismund of Hungary was out against Bajazet, the Infidel, and with him the entire Knighthood of France, very richly attired "like kings"—foremost among them her Admiral, recently returned from dealings with Genoa.

In very "grandly magnificent" array they advanced, one hundred thousand strong, until destiny brought them to Nicopolis. And there, suddenly, at their meal, the Turks swooping down; the French knights eagerly mounting; eagerly, restlessly, and with fatal imprudence, for there were eight thousand Turks against the seven hundred of them, and behind those eight thousand, according to Froissart, one hundred and ninety thousand more. They had given the banner of the Virgin Mary to hold to the Admiral, to "that valiant knight" Jean de Vienne—and at the end of the day, day of disaster and woe for all Christendom, under numberless dead, they found it, still grasped in his hands.

And there one does take leave of him, the Good Admiral of France—and of "many excellent knights and squires of France and other nations," and of those three hundred captive gentlemen "piteously murdered" by Bajazet, for "it was a cruel case for them to suffer for the love of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and may He receive their souls."

And among those of the French who survived—ransomed because of his rank and importance—was

another very great man whom one may not forget, soldier and sailor, filled with years and renown. Boucicaut, Marshal of France.

Filled, too, with unending hatred of the Turks, and a desire to avenge his companions. And Manuel at Constantinople, always more closely hemmed in by the Infidel, was appealing to Europe, and once again the knighthood of France, restless, romantic, came cavalcading to the call. They sailed in 1399, from Aigues Mortes in four *nefs* and two galleys, picking others up on the way, Boucicaut in command; and when the Genoese and Venetian galleys delayed, he pushed on without them to Chios, thence to Gallipoli, escorting the two galleys which he was sending on ahead to Constantinople. But inside the Straits seventeen Turkish galleys were waiting for the two invaders, forced to cut their way out if Boucicaut had not come at once with thirteen more to scatter the enemy. The next day, at Tenedos, Rhodes, and Venice, and Genoa were there, and with his combined fleet of twenty-four galleys and six brigantines Boucicaut went on to Constantinople.

There, with his ships and his two thousand odd men, he harried the Turks, raiding the coast, burning the towns, seizing a fort at the entrance to the Black Sea, and dispersing Bajazet's squadrons. And when Boucicaut returned to Venice, taking with him the Emperor —going in person to solicit further assistance—Châteaumorand, second in command, remained at Constantinople, with a few hundred men and some galleys, and by means of constant sorties held the place for three years; until 1402, when Timur, the Mongol, defeated Bajazet, relieving the pressure.

Pages of the chronicle; random pages; glimpses of

the captains and seamen of France—for space will not permit any prolonged account of their enterprises on all the seas, any account at all of so many of them; enterprises which, in the Mediterranean alone at all times, would fill volumes.

Glimpses—Boucicaut at Genoa, governing for France, commanding in war after war, performing valorous business at sea against Italian and Turk. Boucicaut with his Genoese galleys and French fighting men, caught three to one by Zeno, the Venetian; fighting for hours, almost annihilating the Venetian admiral galley; tearing into a battle in which the Venetians rocked themselves in order to come crashing down on an enemy with a whole side of oars. Boucicaut, battered and sinking, left in possession of the field at the close of the murderous day.

A very great man, in whose hands the tradition of the Good Admiral was not to suffer.

13

In Normandy, with the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Enclosure at Rouen was being increasingly neglected, the building of ships constantly diminished, galleys and barges given away.

But if the King's *navire* had almost ceased to exist, because of national conditions, a continuing restlessness was sending to sea those who were weary now of the Turkish cavalcades. To sea for adventure, to conquer distant island kingdoms where perhaps contentment was to be found—one must return later to the Béthencourt expedition of 1402—to harry the English in countless privateering enterprises. From all the Normandy

ports, from Brittany, and especially, perhaps, from Harfleur. There was still a royal arsenal there, the Hotel of the Pillars, a municipal one as well since 1396, and the harbour had been repaired and fortified with towers and chains as at La Rochelle. In the Sovereign Port seafaring burgher and noble adventurer were joining hands, turning out stout corsairs, as everywhere else indeed, whose battle cry to enemy ships was "France! Take down your sails!" And among them a master called Bart, Samson Bart—a name that was to ring again and again through the annals of maritime France.

Back and forth, back and forth across the Channel, with varying fortunes. The battle of Raz, in 1403, off the Raz de Saint Mahé; Bretons under Clisson embarked in thirty ships from Roscoff to give chase to an English fleet; fighting in two divisions from three until nine in the morning, and then all combined; forty English ships taken, five hundred dead, one thousand prisoners. A smashing victory, bringing fearful reprisals to the Brittany coast. Another Breton armament out to avenge them, and disaster in store; two hundred Bretons, separated from their companions, landed at Blackpool and overwhelmed by six thousand peasants; only twenty-five Bretons alive. Back and forth, raids and reprisals, and Normandy and Brittany always on the water. Another fine victory in 1405; two thousand prisoners, the whole English coast swept, and Southampton burned.

"France! Take down your sails!" And when the civil war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs began to rip France apart, making of it a land without hope, without guidance or rational purpose, it was still

the sailors—from La Rochelle to Harfleur, Normandy French and friendly Breton—the sailors who held on, faithful and staunch, the last to give in, the last to forget.

And then it was five o'clock on the afternoon of August 13, 1413, and Henry V of England off the mouth of the Seine with thirty thousand men in fourteen hundred vessels. Come to take Harfleur. Harfleur assaulted, Harfleur defended, Harfleur besieged, the remnant of the galleys doing their valiant best. Harfleur taken, the citizens banished, in September. Then Agincourt. Later, in 1418, the English host before Rouen. The last two royal galleys fighting in defence of the town; the Enclosure destroyed by the inhabitants in order to leave no shelter for the enemy. The end of a dream, the name only of which was for long centuries to endure. Rouen besieged, month after month, capitulating at last with sixty thousand dead, famished, perished. In 1420, the treaty of Troyes, and the French crown to Harry.

The end of the realm, as at Rouen there had been an end to the dream of two sailor kings—but no. La Rochelle was still there, faithful and staunch, providing a base for allies from Scotland and Spain; winning battles at sea to hearten the Normandy corsairs who on their side were still hanging on. The sailors. And after the treaty, the sailors again, faithful and staunch; abandoning an English Normandy, leaving in droves to settle at La Rochelle and in the Brittany ports; at Saint Malo, the sailors, defending the Mount of St. Michael, repeatedly breaking the siege which was to last some thirty years, keeping an English fleet of one hundred and twenty ships at bay for two weeks and

saving the good Rochellese. Everywhere the sailors, who never gave up.

And a Maid coming soon to Orléans, for France does not die. And a man called Jacques Cœur—one will speak of him again—with money and ships for a French King restored.

CHAPTER III

MARITIME PRINCES

1

One went back sixty years before the Christian era to find great Ponant ships in Armorica, on the western Ocean, bringing tin and amber from Britain and the Baltic to be distributed overland through the Gallic port of Corbilo, which was to be Saint Nazaire; one must go back some six hundred years before that era—and before that the Phœnicians had been there—to find the permanent beginnings, on the Mediterranean shore of Gaul, among the Ligurians, of Levant shipping and naval enterprise, bringing the culture and maritime aptitude of Greece to be introduced to a barbarian world through the ancient port of Massalia, which was to be Marseille.

They came from Phocea, foremost of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor, celebrated for their merchant sailors and their long fifty oared ships in which they were the first among the seafaring Greeks to push on as far to the West as the Adriatic; and further, to the coasts of Liguria where a great river, the Rhone, came down to the Inland Sea; and to the shores of Iberia, beyond the Pyrenees, last border land stretching towards the Pillars of Hercules and an emptiness of waters. From Phocea, in 600 B. C., skirting along the

beaches, from headland to headland, led, it is said, by Simos the merchant and his son Protis, and with them Aristarche, a priestess of Artemis. Coming in time to a haven encircled with mountains, in the country of Nann, a ruler of the Ligurians.

And where Nann dwelt it was the season in which his daughter, Gyptis, was to select a husband from among her assembled suitors, handing him the ceremonial cup of water at the feast. And the Greeks had been bidden—they were to have the harbour which they desired, and the strangers were welcome—and Protis was there, looking at Gyptis; and she looking at him, handing him the cup, which he took. And Gyptis became Aristoxena, the Best of Hostesses, and Protis Euxenos, the Well Fortuned Guest.

So, it is said, Massalia was founded.

2

There was always, from then on with varying fortunes, to be a haven there, a maritime community—reinforced by refugees from Phocea, after the destruction of the mother city by the Persians, in 540 B. C.—an outpost and survivor of Greece; an essentially seafaring republic, renowned builders of ships and contrivers of naval appliances; rivals of Carthage, allies of Rome; navigators and colonizers; inheritors of one of the richest marine traditions in the Mediterranean; ancestors of modern Marseille. Seamen and *armateurs,* "armers" of ships, for twenty-five hundred years.

Very slowly at first, very precariously. If there were any Phocean colonies founded elsewhere in that first century of existence, they must have perished. Wars with the Etruscans, wars with the Carthaginians, wars

with the Ligurians who were not always the best of hosts. A century of wars. But in the fifth century B. C. there was peace; truce between Carthage and Massalia; expansion and colonization. Colonies along the Ligurian coast to the East, on the sites of Antibes, for instance, of Nice and Monaco; to the West, at Rhodanusia, somewhere on the Rhone—the localities are in many cases uncertain, the permanence temporary, little fortified posts the very names of which are conjectural—along the Iberian shore, at Rhoda and Emporiæ certainly, on the Gulf of Rosas; for a while, during the splendid fourth century B. C., all the way around to the Pillars themselves.

Some venturing, also, beyond the Pillars; two celebrated navigators in search of new trade routes, whether in their own vessels, or on behalf of some forthgoing Massalian shipping house of the day, is not known; Euthymenes to Africa, with or without a by your leave to the Carthaginians; Pytheas—the first mariner to note the influence of the moon upon the tides—Pytheas to Armorica, to Ushant, along the coast of Britain up to the Orkneys, on to Thule in the misty North, then back to the Teuton shore from the Rhine to the Elbe; a noteworthy voyage. But tin and amber could be brought much more quickly to Massalia overland from Armorica, and a century later Carthage was again an enemy, overwhelming the Iberian colonies, closing the Pillars of Hercules. Massalia turned more and more definitely to the East, allied with Rome during the Punic wars, and after the fall of Carthage too busily concerned with the Mediterranean, a teeming port filled with merchants and shipping, to undertake new departures into the Western Ocean.

And then Julius Cæsar was there, some half dozen years after his destruction of the Venetes, and Massalia opposing him. With seventeen ships and swarms of smaller vessels combatting Cæsar's fleet of twenty-two built at Arles, modelled after the great ships that he had seen in Armorica. And the Massalians were better sailors than the Romans and surrounded them, but gradually the Roman grappling hooks immobilized the battle, and in plain hand to hand, sword and shield business the Legions were invincible. The Massalians withdrew, after a very great slaughter, losing nine ships—and assembled another fleet of ten to co-operate with galleys from Pompey. But the galleys decamped; two Massalians rammed each other in attempting to sink the Roman flagship; at the end, only one vessel remained to carry the news to Massalia.

After more than five hundred years, Phocean Massalia was conquered. Rome was in Gaul; and Cæsar building a rival base, capable of sheltering two hundred warships, at Forum Julii, where now the silting of centuries has left only the little town of Fréjus.

3

Massalia conquered, reduced, inconspicuous for a thousand years. Then out of the obscurity, with the crusading twelfth century sending great argosies to the Levant, a new maritime Marseille emerging—a new Marseille that was henceforth to endure—rising quickly with Venice, Pisa and Genoa to leadership in the Mediterranean. With each succeeding crusade privileged and enriched, its waterfront clamorous—that old Port that you see to-day, set apart from the new, sun baked and brilliantly blue after a tortuous descent through

incredibly nocturnal streets—clamorous with the prosperity of countless *armateur* houses.

The memory of such a house of those times preserved for posterity, owing to the fortunate survival and discovery of its records, a house typical no doubt of many others, the names of which have been lost. The Manduel family of Marseille. Natives originally of Manduel, near Nîmes, in the opening years of the thirteenth century Etienne de Manduel was settled in Marseille, trading with Sicily, later with Barbary, Egypt and Syria, principally concerned with banking and the exportation of moneys. Thirty years later, and until 1237, his son, Bernard, was carrying on the business, expanding it to reach every part of the Mediterranean, transforming the banking house into one of the foremost seafaring mercantile enterprises on that sea.

When Bernard's brother, Jean de Manduel, took charge, he found a concern transporting wheat, sugar and wine, cloth, and silk, and bullion to every corner of Our Sea; trading constantly with Ceuta, Oran and Tunis; closely related with Montpellier, Avignon and Nîmes; maintaining factors in every coastal and inland centre, representatives at every commercial fair in Europe; inaugurating, in his day, an additional direct traffic with England. Himself one of the wealthiest and most important merchant shippers of his time, possessor of several residences at Marseille and of a vast estate in Majorca.

Very patriotic, very devoted to Marseille. And in 1245, when Provence was to come under the domination of the Count of Anjou, Marseille was repeatedly in rebellion, jealous of its liberties, stubborn for its Provençal independence. And Jean de Manduel would not

sign the peace in 1252; along with how many or how few of his fellow maritime princes one cannot say, he preferred to risk all of his belongings, all of his resources, on behalf of the persistently militant city; after the second peace of 1262, he was still unresigned, still conspiring against the new Count of Provence. And for that, in 1264, they beheaded him, in his native Marseille, confiscating his goods and his fortune.

And a great name was erased.

The fourteenth century, the fifteenth century, and the man called Jacques Cœur—but he belongs more properly to Montpellier—the sixteenth century. The Lenche brothers of Marseille and their Coral Fishery Companies, very curious and oldest of the organized colonization companies in France; a smuggling enterprise with Algiers originally, later "magnificent lords," very wealthy, maintaining establishments in Tunisia and Algeria, at their "House of Bône," at the Cap de Rose, at the Bastion; seeds of a much later flowering of French influence on these shores. The Lady Magdeleine Lartessuti of Avignon, "Madame Magdeleine," shipowner; separated from her absconding husband; assisted with revenues by the Pope; her possessions at Marseille protected by the King; with the aid of her lover, the royal galley commander, Saint Blancard, restoring her fortunes by means of maritime and privateering ventures from the Pillars to the Golden Horn; coming forward in 1536 to the relief of Marseille, attacked by the Emperor Charles V, with money for galleys and artillery, furnishings, clothes and supplies of every description.

The sixteenth century, and Francis I of France crusading against the Turks, a constant warfare against

the Algerine pirates; later, during the wars with Spain, more friendly relations with the Sultan, developing into a naval alliance of some years' standing; in 1543, a Turkish fleet quartered at Toulon, to the dismay of the inhabitants who had first to be removed, and to the annoyance of Christendom. A naval alliance brought about with Suliman the Magnificent at Constantinople by a remarkable adventurer, illegitimate waif, soldier, diplomat, sailor, Antoine Escalin des Aymars, sometime plain Captain Polin, eventually, under Henry II, Baron de La Garde, renowned Admiral of the galleys. A naval alliance endowed with commercial advantages; "capitulations," at various periods renewed and revised, granting exclusive freedom of Turkish trade to France and the establishment of "consuls" in the Levant by Marseille, become the arbiter of Levantine commerce; the victim, too, of ceaseless depredations by the pirates of Algiers, of Tunis and Tripoli, until in the 1620s Marseille was discouraged by conditions which it was to take American squadrons some two hundred years later to remedy.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and a wide revival of trade with the Levant, a brilliant era of traffic with the West Indies. The Roux brothers, Georges and André—after 1749, Georges alone, "Roux of Corsica"—greatest of all the great Marseille *armateurs* of that golden age, Bessons and Audiberts, Rangonys, Arnouxs, Gassins and Borélys. With his father, in 1720, Georges Roux made the first of those voyages to Martinique which he was to do so much to exploit and colonize, and which was to earn him his marquisate of Brue in 1750, and a part of his colossal fortune of thirty millions of *livres*. A fortune which he

was to expend without stint, magnificent host in his palatial Marseille *hotel*, lavish entertainer of princes; with the advent of the Seven Years' War, issuing a personal manifesto challenging the King of England—from Georges Roux to *Georges Roi*—arming five sumptuous privateers of his own and a company of Cadets in blue uniforms with red facings, borrowing eight million *livres* with which to do it and resigning his share of the prize money in advance to his captains and crews; on another occasion, in 1746, maintaining two thousand colonists for Guyana on his estate for two months, shipping them finally in four vessels, and at no expense to the State. Roux of Corsica, owner of ships, legendary throughout Provence and all France, and in the Islands across the ocean.

Massalia—Marseille—but one may not, in these crowded pages, stay there any longer, for to write the history of the Phocean city would be to write the history, maritime, commercial and diplomatic, of the whole Mediterranean. And one must return through the centuries to the man called Jacques Cœur.

4

Jacques Cœur, born presumably in 1396—the year of Nicopolis—son of Pierre Cœur, a sufficiently well to do merchant furrier of Bourges; thriving mercantile city of central France, under the protection of that John the Magnificent, Duke of Berry, uncle to Charles VI the Mad, who was to have led the invasion of England from Sluys; soon, in 1422, during the dreadful years of the Hundred Years' War, while France was waiting for Joan of Arc—during the years of Jacques Cœur's young manhood—destined to become the true

capital of the realm, since English Henry held Paris; the refuge and stronghold, for ten years past already, of that Dauphin who was to be crowned Charles VII at Rheims by the Maid, in 1429.

Goldsmith's apprentice in his youth—the precious metal was always to cling to his fingers—Jacques Cœur was married in 1422 to the daughter of a provost of the town; a son, born in 1423, was incredibly to be named Archbishop of Bourges by the Pope at the age of twenty-three, consecrated at twenty-seven; other children were to furnish the ancestry of the Gallatin family, and consequently of an American Secretary of the Treasury, and through them of the financial Neckers and of the celebrated Madame de Staël—the precious metal still clinging, after long centuries.

And as for Jacques Cœur—along with Pierre and Etienne Godard of Bourges, and Ravant Ladenois, a refugee from Rouen after the English occupation in 1419—he was soon minting coins for the Crown. A lucrative but perilous business, since the weight and value of coins, established by statute, were nonetheless constantly subject to the King's private variations, for the purpose of increasing his "toll" from the bullion, which the mint must obey. And in due time, and inevitably, Jacques Cœur and his companions were arrested, charged with falsification of coins, freely admitting it since it was the fault of the royal officers, fined and promptly pardoned for their offence.

He was next to appear at Damascus, in 1432; partner himself, since 1430 with the Godards, in a mercantile firm which endured until their death in 1439; now one of a company of merchants purchasing spices; wrecked in their returning galley off Corsica, cast ashore

and stripped to their shirts by the inhabitants, the owner and the captain held for ransom, the destitute merchants set free. Jacques Cœur the navigating merchant—the transition is unexplained, the beginning obscure, the going down to the sea of this inland bred burgher; the rise was to be unbelievably rapid, the achievement legendary, the fortune and influence phenomenal.

In 1436, supervisor of the mint at Paris—the English were out again, the Maid five years dead—reforming the coinage, minting full, fine and ringing. In 1438, Monneyer to the King, receiver of all revenues, dispenser of all royal expenditure. In 1440 ennobled, in 1441 Royal Commissioner to the States of Languedoc, in 1447 ambassador to Genoa, in 1448 to the Pope. In 1449, for the reconquest of Normandy, advancing one hundred thousand *écus* to the King, organizing, encouraging, leading in person in princely apparel, held responsible by the English as one of the chief causes of their defeat. In 1450, advancing further sums for the reconquest of Guyenne; advancing in all perhaps the equivalent of three million francs, unheard of private resources, equal to the fifth of the royal revenues from taxation. And in 1450—already in 1439—probably the greatest merchant shipowner in Europe.

And in 1453 penniless and fugitive. The rise unbelievably rapid, the achievement legendary, the fortune and influence phenomenal—the downfall fantastic.

5

In 1430 when Jacques Cœur turned his face to the sea, Charles VII had just been crowned again, the Maid was at Rouen, awaiting her trial, the Hundred Years'

War was not over. The English were done in France, but they were not yet turned out, not for twenty years, Paris was not taken, France was still dismembered and incomplete, in Normandy Dieppe and in the Ponant La Rochelle the only available ports—Brittany not a part of the realm until the marriage of its Duchess Anne to Charles VIII in 1491, Bordeaux in English hands, Provence independent—the kingdom drained of any vitality, communication and travel a disorganized peril, finances a memory, the King snipping "tolls" from his coins, exchange sunk to nothing, commerce and trade, it must have seemed, gone for ever. Rouen dependent upon the Corporation of the Water Merchants of Paris —their seal is the seal of the city—for some use of the Seine; Bretons and Spanish supreme on the Ocean; Catalonia, Genoa and Marseille engaged in piracy, obstructing the Rhone, while the Flemish took hold in the Mediterranean; of those ports on that sea actually a political part of France at the time, Narbonne silting up, Aigues Mortes drying up, receding inland, Montpellier itself, the harbour that is, already at odds with the sands that were to destroy it; the merchants of Languedoc pushed to one side, hard pressed by foreign competition and shipping.

In such times it was, under such conditions and at such a place, Montpellier, that Jacques Cœur, "a man of the utmost industry and genius . . . endowed with great mental ability, unceasing perseverance and rare prudence"—these are contemporary opinions—elected in 1440 to establish his mercantile and maritime enterprises; "the first in his day" to build and equip ships in which to transport "every class of merchandise" manufactured within the realm to Africa, to Egypt, to

the Levant; to return therefrom with silks, spices and precious stuffs to be distributed by way of the Rhone throughout the languishing markets of France; to emancipate his country's commerce from foreign control and from foreign shipping; to revive marine activity and substitute it for that of Barcelona, and Genoa, and Venice.

National goods, in national ships—that was his new and inspired conception—and the products of the eastern Mediterranean in exchange; and soon "in the affairs of his calling there was no equal to him in the world," nor in time in the Levant any mast "which was not ornamented with the *fleur de lys,*" the lilies of France, nor any strange vessel that "dared to come" into Languedoc.

He was to deal, also, with England and Flanders, but the Levant was his field, the source of his wealth and the theatre of his greatest activity and diplomacy. To curtail the prevailing hostility towards the Turks; to obtain unlimited papal authority to trade with the Infidel, increasing the number and scope of Montpellier's "permitted ships"; to promote friendly relations with the Arabs at Cairo; to secure from them commercial favours for Venice; to procure for Rhodes, at her request, a treaty of peace from the Sultan of Egypt, and for France a treaty of commerce and amity; to stand, arbiter of the Mediterranean, behind him a Pope, a King and a Sultan, benefactor of Rhodes, patron of Venice, influential in Genoa and Barcelona, "citizen" of Marseille for the sake of its prestige and credit—these were some of his policies, of his endeavours and achievements.

And another, less creditable, although more endur-

ing. The institution of the *chiourme,* the galley slave gang; the permission received from the King, along with other financial aids and supports—for Charles backed his man, and Languedoc too, and saw eye to eye with him, for a time—the permission to impress malefactors and vagabonds to serve at the oars in the ships. Malefactors and vagabonds—and Jacques Cœur's agents, and the seneschalcy of Montpellier, very zealous indeed and not always so particular, perhaps, along the waterfronts. Some slave running, too, in his ships, together with a great passenger traffic, and serious trouble in store from those sources.

At the height of his splendour a fleet of Cœur galleys, and *nefs,* and *fustes;* on one occasion, for the affair with Genoa in 1448, a squadron of eleven ships equipped by him; a merchants' emporium at Montpellier, plans of all sorts, for Aigues Mortes, for canals, for ship building; establishments at Damascus, at Alexandria, at Beirout, throughout the Levant; branch houses and residences, some thirty of them, and a great number of estates and manors, all over France—eight in Bourges alone, including the palace which one may still see—a great central warehouse at Tours, filled with choice supplies for the Court, jewels, and furs, and cloth of gold, spices, perfumes, materials and armour; six houses at Lyon, where the commercial fair, thanks to him, was restored to its earlier importance; three hundred factors, everywhere "on land and sea," loyal and devoted agents, heads of his branches, trusted and powerful; the Noir brothers, for instance, Huguet and Rostain at Lyon, Antoine at Montpellier; Guillaume de Varye at Tours, Comptroller General of Finance for Languedoc.

And the galley captains, excellent fellows—all but one of them who made trouble—devoted and faithful; Jean Forest, Guillardet, Guillaume Gimart; and the famous Jean de Village, Jacques Cœur's nephew-in-law, in his service at the age of fifteen, galley commander and factor at Marseille, later Admiral to the King of Provence, Chamberlain to the Duke of Calabria, Captain General of the *galéasses* of France, and at all times a very capable, dashing sailor. For long years navigating to Turkey, to Egypt, to Barbary, frequently entrusted with silver and bullion, with the transportation of Moorish and Turkish personages of note. So that when the time came for that embassy from the King and Jacques Cœur—or was it Jacques Cœur and the King—to the Sultan of Egypt, and for the negotiation of that treaty of commerce and amity, it was Jean de Village who was chosen.

To carry the King's gifts of armour and weapons—only they were actually Jacques Cœur's gifts, with or without the King's permission, and there was a papal bull against the giving of arms to the Infidel which Jacques Cœur may or may not have had suspended in his favour, all of which was soon to cause argument and disaster—to carry the gifts "in great state," and talk to the Sultan, and sail back with a "robe of state" and a letter praising "thy ambassador, a man of honour, a gentleman," granting the mercantile privileges, and announcing gifts in return—a beautiful leopard, and objects of porcelain, a jar of fine green ginger and one of green pepper, some almonds, some spices, some sugar, and "God lead thee to salvation, Charles, King of France."

But Jacques Cœur was on his way to destruction.

6

It all went to his head, of course.

There has been learned talk of intrigues with the rebellious Dauphin, Louis XI to be; of moneys received from the Pope, and of machinations with the Holy See at a time when it was the express policy of the King of France to emancipate himself from Rome. That in the days of the reconquest of Normandy, when the King was proposing to raise funds through taxation of the clergy, Jacques Cœur instead advanced money, a very large sum of money, part of which the Pope later informed the Cardinals had been loaned by himself, a secret and unpalatable obligation imposed without the King's knowledge upon the Treasury of France—the said Jacques Cœur, while always "a most faithful and devoted servitor of His Majesty," having nevertheless "procured for us [the Pope] some other things contrary to the [French] Majesty," and having also "worked with an indefatigable zeal for the good, for the unity and for the aggrandisement of the Holy See, in which he has spared no labour or expense." And that for these reasons of State—as Mr. Kerr has been the first to point out—he was to suffer "unjustly very grave and prolonged persecutions." And these things are true, and in them lies, no doubt, the real reason, never officially made manifest, for the amazing royal vengeance which was to overtake him.

But the fact remains that he had also become completely insufferable, the first, and last, word in *parvenus;* incredibly ostentatious, in his astounding, and very beautiful, palace of a home—in all his multitudinous homes—in his spectacular hospitality, in his

deliberate display of wealth and authority, in his apparel and state, covering himself with gorgeous garments so that you could not tell him from a Prince of the Blood; bedecking himself with the pride of his influence so that you could not tell him from the Majesty of France; assigning to himself all the attributes of nobility—he had in fact been ennobled—of royalty indeed, while ridiculing the caste which he constantly offended with presumptuous familiarity; unspeakably arrogant, high handed, haughty—but not with his factors and captains—conceited, boastful, exhibitionist; his money, his ships, his warehouses, his treaties, his embassies, his Pope, his King, his Sultan, what he had done and what he could at any time do; patronizing proposer of unsolicited favours—just call on Jacques Cœur, the indispensable one—impudent and sardonic purveyor of too numerous financial accommodations to indigent nobles who despised him. And who could not repay him, and who must consequently destroy him.

It would have been better and more self respecting —the ultimate, State motives remaining in the background—if they had listed those human and comprehensible envies and jealousies of him, rather than the perjuries and half truths with which court cabals, with the royal connivance, were to traduce him, in 1451, before the tribunals of the realm. That he had poisoned the King's mistress, Agnes Sorel; that he had made forbidden gifts of arms to the Infidel; that he had defrauded the King of large sums in Languedoc; that he had illegally exported silver and coins from the country; that he had wrongfully impressed crews at Montpellier; that he had arbitrarily, as reported by his

one disloyal captain, caused an escaped Christian slave to be deported; and anything else that anyone happened, from time to time, to imagine.

And as for Agnes Sorel, the accusation was concocted at Court by Jacques Colonna, an Italian, and Jeanne de Vendôme—she and her husband in debt to Jacques Cœur—perjurers immediately exposed and imprisoned; and as for the arms to the Infidel, Jacques Cœur maintained that he had the King's permission, and also the Pope's; and as for the exportation of silver —a medium more valuable than gold in the Levant, and one of the principal foundations of his wealth, through exchange—Jacques Cœur explained that the coins so exported had been foreign coins and not French; and as for the rest, he protested his innocence. But where Charles had promised to ignore all the other charges once the poisoning was disproved, the accused was held on all counts, including the admittedly perjured testimony concerning the King's deceased lady.

And for the trial, which was to last for nine months with all the processes of seizure well under way from the start, no counsel or witnesses for Jacques Cœur, only such documents as he could procure from widely scattered and often inaccessible records; and as members of the Bed of Justice, the King's Advocate and Attorney General, serving both as prosecutors and judges, assisted by three of the defendant's *accusers*—all of them debtors to the prisoner, two of them bitter enemies, practitioners against him of the black arts of magic, the driving of pins into wax effigies and similar mummeries.

A disgraceful business—and the Church clamouring all the time to have Jacques Cœur's case transferred to the clerical courts, on the grounds that he had once

obtained letters of tonsure, and was consequently a "clerk," but the request was naturally not granted. And finally, in March, 1453, threatened with torture, Jacques Cœur, still protesting his innocence, agreed to accept the testimony deposed against him, except in the matter of the poisoning. A confession of sorts, and in May the judgment was rendered. He must officially confess illegal gifts to the Sultan, illegal exporting of coins, extortions in Languedoc; he must redeem the deported runaway slave; he must pay a fine to the King of three hundred thousand *écus;* he must be imprisoned until he had fulfilled these requirements, and then banished; and in the meantime all of his goods and possessions were confiscated.

The process, already begun at his arrest, was persistently pursued by the royal sheriffs; auctions at Bourges, at Paris, at Tours, at Lyon and Poitiers; ships sold by the candle inch method of bidding; estates given away to some of the accusers and judges; his debtors in many cases excused—and an appeal by his sons visited with royal severity—the markets inundated with such an outpouring of jewels, and plate, and furs, and silks as had never been seen, and the loot taken away for a song. But not all of it. Try as they might, with violence and reprisals, the sheriffs could never put their hands on the whole of Jacques Cœur's estate, for the factors and captains were faithful, courageous and swiftly resourceful. At Montpellier, Jean de Village, with Guillaume Gimart and the other captains, sailed the galleys away to Marseille—they were finally to negotiate on Jacques Cœur's behalf a profitable surrender of them to the King—while their wives saved the furniture; at Lyon, Huguet and Rostain Noir, and Antoine at Montpellier,

fled immediately to Avignon with account books and moneys, and everything else they could carry; on all sides the factors went flying from France, their arms filled with salvage.

And in 1454, Jacques Cœur himself, last heard of in confinement at Poitiers, was a fugitive, escaped from his prison.

7

From convent to convent, claiming right of sanctuary, aided no doubt by his sons, perhaps by the Pope—no one knows how the escape was accomplished—at Limoges, at Avignon; driven from place to place, flying by night, hidden by day, pursued and beset with betrayal and murder, finally at Beaucaire, in the Cordelier convent, across the Rhone from Tarascon in Provence, only a short distance from Marseille. And there again the royal pursuit was around him, concocting seizure, conspiring death. Somebody warned him of a languishing poison prepared for him, effective in sixteen days; at the end of his tether, he pretended to drink it, pretended the consequent physical symptoms, assuring himself of a few days' security while they waited to see—and got word to his captains, to Jean de Village.

"For God's sake, dear son, bestir yourself to come to my aid, or alive you will not find me."

Those excellent fellows, the captains; faithful, courageous and swiftly resourceful; gallant and "jubilant," and a fig for the King of France since their master, Jacques Cœur, had need of them.

Jean de Village came to Tarascon immediately; through a Cordelier friar he communicated with Jacques Cœur; he returned to Marseille and summoned the

captains, and in a short while they were back, with men at arms from Provence, relays of galleys arranged down the Rhone, and a boat under the walls of Beaucaire. A hole in the walls of Beaucaire, and the lot of them crawling through in the dark, bursting at matins into the church of the Cordeliers, surrounding Jacques Cœur, carrying him off through the streets of Beaucaire with bloody commotion, leaving behind them a scattering of sheriff's "atrociously and mortally wounded."

A hearty and inspiring business, the passing of Jacques Cœur's captains through Beaucaire, and over the river to Tarascon, with their master among them; a fresh, clean touch of the sea, briny words on the wind, and above the din of the rescue the broad laughter of sailors.

And at Rome, when it was all over, and Jacques Cœur was safe under the protection of the Pope's brilliant welcome, the captains were there again, and the factors too, attentive, and careful, and meticulously honest, for the rendering of accounts and inventories, the tale of their master's belongings which they had managed to preserve. It had required great skill and decision, a very great risk, and for some of them the certain acceptance of a heavy royal displeasure. For Jean de Village, the organizer of the rescue, it meant banishment, and service under the King of Provence. But he was too good a man, too good a sailor, and in 1457 Charles VII called him home, fully pardoned, reinstated in his title of Captain General of the *galéasses* of France, placed in charge of Jacques Cœur's old flotilla which Guillaume de Varye and some of the former factors had bought back.

The King was now actually restoring some of the

confiscated property to the family; under Louis XI there was to be a rehabilitation of Jacques Cœur, three of his sons, and Guillaume de Varye, and of course Jean de Village, in high favour; but there was nothing for Jacques Cœur himself, or for his devoted captain, Guillaume Gimart, for they were no longer there to be called home. They had gone with the Pope's naval expedition to Rhodes and Constantinople—a diversion for the purpose of assisting the Hungarian Hunyadi, at grips with the invading Turk under the walls of Belgrade—Jacques Cœur in command, in his sixtieth year, Guillaume Gimart at his side.

And out there in his Levant, in 1456, they died; Guillaume Gimart in battle, Jacques Cœur from an illness, at Chios where the Genoese buried him with every honour, as though he had been "one of the great ones of Genoa." And in the Cathedral at Bourges, in time, a tablet to the Lord Jacques Cœur, Soldier, Captain of the Church against the Infidels.

But it should have been to the Lord Jacques Cœur, Merchant and Master of Ships—the like of whom was not to be seen again until the days of Jean Ango, the Jacques Cœur of the North.

8

The Angos of Dieppe. But the family came originally from Rouen, bankers of long standing in that city, after a preliminary sojourn, it seems more than likely, at Honfleur, where Jehan Ango was a member of the "Charity," the mariners' benevolent association; Jehan Ango, the father; applying, in 1463, for citizenship at Dieppe, founding a shipping house there, sending his fishing vessels, commanded by men from Honfleur

again, to the North American grounds which had for long years been familiar to the seamen of Normandy and Brittany—one must return to these matters on a further page.

He died in 1510, leaving an already very large fortune to his son, Jean Ango; a man then in his thirties, well educated, at home in the classics, a patron of the arts and of all beautiful things; a patron, too, of all maritime ventures, of exploration and discovery, of commerce and warfare; a merchant shipper of extensive renown, an armer of vessels, of whole fleets which he placed at the King's disposal together with all of his resources and wealth, merchantmen, fighting ships, corsairs—in 1525, shipping of his at Newfoundland, in the West Indies, in Africa, in Brazil, at the Azores, on the way to the East Indies, at war off the coasts of Spain—Receiver of Dieppe, in 1512, later Viscount and Governor of Dieppe, "Noble Jean Ango . . . Lieutenant, within the city and castle of Dieppe, of high and powerful lord, Messer the Admiral of France, and Captain of said city and of the castle therein."

A master of ships and of noteworthy mariners and captains. Navigators, corsairs—pirates at times, if one must split hairs about it, but one of them a scholar and poet. Pierre Mauclerc, Pierre Crignon, Michel Féré, Guyon d'Etimanville, Cardin d'Esqueville-Bléville, Jean and Raoul Parmentier, Silvestre Billes, Jean Fain and Jean Fleury. Normandy seamen, from Dieppe and Honfleur.

9

Jean Fain of Dieppe and Jean Fleury of Honfleur, two hardy customers, tough, ocean soaked sea dogs, ter-

rors of the sea; one of them, Fleury, the Devil in person, a second Eustache le Moine in contemporary legend; frequently confused, in subsequent writings, with the Italian explorer, Giovanni Verrazano, and some of his exploits and even his death assigned to the latter; the Spanish form of his name, Florin, taken to signify the Florentine; but actually a distinct personage, Norman born, standing full blooded in his own boots.

Italian and Spanish wars, Francis I of France and the Emperor Charles V, Jean Ango's captains were always at sea—and with them commanders from other Normandy and Brittany ports, for it was not only from Dieppe that men went out constantly into an ocean filled with Spanish treasure ships sailing home from a fabulous, newly revealed continent in the West—always at sea, watching Cadiz, hovering about the Canaries and the Azores, spying out galleons and caravels. Jean Fain, Michel Féré, Silvestre Billes and the rest, and always foremost among them Jean Fleury.

In 1522, boarding seven Spaniards loaded with gold and jewels, holding five of them against a rescuing fleet; and when Jean Fain was taken by neutral Portuguese privateers and very nearly put to death by the King of Portugal, raiding the African and Spanish coasts with reprisals for the next five years to come, making a resounding name for himself throughout the Ponant, and in the Mediterranean as well, attracting the personal attention and correspondence of Francis I. In 1523, off the Azores in his three hundred ton flagship, the *Dieppe,* with seven other *nefs* and galleons, waiting for Mendoza's treasure fleet from Mexico, carrying the reports and the loot of Cortez's conquest; chasing three caravels sent from Spain to protect Men-

doza; capturing two of them, with Cortez's lieutenants, off Cape Saint Vincent; driving the Spanish into continued furies. In 1527, finally, imprudently scattering his ships, taken, with Silvestre Billes, by six Biscayan vessels; spoken for by Portugal where they considered his head worth ten thousand ducats; offering a ransom of thirty thousand himself; but the Basques took him to the Emperor who promptly beheaded him, remembering the Mexican treasure.

But Silvestre Billes was still there, escaped from the galleys, the Parmentiers were still there, Jean Fain was still there, released by the Portuguese—until suddenly, in 1530, they had him again.

Those Portuguese, and the Spanish too—for one thing in France, as in England, men were exasperated by the presumption of a New World divided by papal decision, as a result of Columbus's voyage, between Spain and Portugal. A "new" world, parts of which French seamen had been frequenting for years; and it was Francis I—ostentatious Francis, who fancied himself at sea, who founded Francescopolis, or the Havre de Grâce which is modern Havre, to replace the old Galley Enclosure, who caused the construction of some enormous, world astonishing vessels—Francis I who sarcastically wished to be shown Adam's testament setting forth such an arrangement of terrestrial spoils. And it was Jean Ango and other Normandy *armateurs,* eager to continue sending their ships to Guinea, to Brazil, wherever they pleased, without interference from Spain or Portugal—one must look on another page at the beginnings of French maritime enterprise towards those shores—who set up a cry for free seas, and upon those seas the banners of an unceasing struggle against Portu-

guese exclusion; a struggle, transferred to Spain, which was to endure, temporarily embittered by Huguenot passion, for more than a century—and these matters, also, must be looked at elsewhere.

In 1531, Jean Ango was prepared to wage war on Portugal—not, as legend was to record, in his own sovereign person, defying John III and blockading Lisbon of his own volition—but with all the power of his ships and captains, furnished with proper letters of marque from the King, and with all the resources of his wealth and diplomacy. In times of war, you might be given letters of marque, legalizing your seizure of enemy vessels by your own privateers—documents the possession of which established the difference between corsairs and pirates; in times of alleged peace, after proof of damage sustained at the hands of any nation, you might be granted similar letters of marque by "right of reprisals," permitting you to recover your losses at the expense of all citizens of the nation at fault. It was for such letters of reprisal that Jean Ango petitioned; sweetening his request with a magnificent diamond for Admiral Chabot; obtaining them without undue delay; able, he and his allied *armateurs,* to send out thirty vessels to the dismay and disaster of Portugal.

And where Jacques Cœur had had his Pope, his King and his Sultan, Jean Ango—come to Court to maintain his rights, and demanding them without diffidence—had two Kings and an Emperor, an Admiral and several ambassadors all writing letters about him, appealing, protesting, intriguing and bribing. Bribing the Admiral, filling his pockets with Portuguese gold outweighing the Ango diamond, so that Jean Ango, aware of these secrecies but too prudent to reveal them,

thought it best to accept the Portuguese ambassador's sixty thousand ducats, in exchange for his letters of marque which the Admiral would soon have revoked.

But at Rouen, everywhere in Normandy, they were furious. The Admiral had forbidden all navigation to the Portuguese possessions, to Brazil for wood, to Guinea for pepper and ivory, to the Indies for spices; he did it again in 1532; and Jean Ango, for one, ignored the restriction, sending his ships into the excluded waters until the Portuguese spies at Dieppe were convinced that he must be either bought off or sunk. So it was that his *Michelle* was captured by a Portuguese fleet, that his *Alouette* and *Musette* were attacked—and awkward questions to answer at the Admiralty, but he insisted that his ships were returning from a place "where no Christian had ever yet been." And the laugh was not all with the Portuguese, for there had been two Frenchmen at Fez in Morocco, ostensibly buyers of ostrich feathers, quietly preparing for an expedition which Francis I was to send, in 1533, to obtain trading posts for Jean Ango on that coast. And Francis would again have given out letters of marque against Portugal, but again the subsidized Admiral talked him out of it, closing the disputed navigation until 1539.

But not closing it entirely. A swarm of raiders out, against Portugal, against Spain, in the face of terrific Portuguese atrocities, capturing incredible prizes. Tiny thirty-five ton vessels, some of them, like the *Bonne Aventure;* others like that fellow at Cuba, bombarded by three Spanish ships for three days, and destroying them; like that Gascony *nef* in company with a *patache* from Bayonne, sweeping the West Indies, sacking Havana. Corsairs—intruders, pirates—assembled in

squadrons, links in a chain stretching from Seville to America. And suddenly, in 1540, the Admiral exposed, the Admiral arrested, navigation thrown open, the sailors turned loose, roaring out of every port, for Guinea again, for Brazil, for that hidden coast where men from Le Croisic had found gold. In 1542, war with Spain, and the privateers at Cartagena, at Cadiz, until a Spaniard exclaimed that "three or four French ships are just as much masters of the Sea of Mexico as the Emperor is master of the Guadalquivir river." Then a peace, in 1545, and restrictions in force once more, for reasons of State doubtless not manifest to the simple minds of seamen.

But for a while Jean Ango and his Normandy *armateurs* had won their stout fight for the freedom of seas.

10

It was not all fighting and contention, however. In the midst of these turbulent matters, there had been time for amenities, and the arts, and scholarship. A beautiful home at the entrance to the harbour of Dieppe, a marvel of carved woodwork and Italian ornamentation, reputed by seventeenth century critics to be the finest example of its type in France—it was regrettably to be burned in the English bombardment of 1694—filled with objects of art brought back to him in his ships from all over the world. A magnificent hospitality there—and in his later country manor of Varangeville, an architectural loveliness still existent, restored to intelligent ownership after long generations of farm yard neglect—a sumptuous hospitality of entertainment for the King; a warm hearted hospitality of welcome for his

captains and pilots; a generous hospitality of studious sympathy and concern for the problems of navigation and geography, for the Florentine representatives of that artistic and intellectual Italian *Renaissance* culture with which he loved to surround himself.

A great many Florentines at this time, driven abroad by the civil wars in Florence, Genoese too, located at Dieppe and at Rouen; bankers, merchants and shipowners; attracted to Normandy perhaps by that long standing Italian strain established there in the days of Philip the Handsome's shipyard. Such families as the Brunelleschis; the Centuriones; the Rucellaïs, nephews of Lorenzo the Magnificent, founders of the mercantile house of Rousselay; and the Verrazanos, Giovanni and Girolamo. Friends and associates of Jean Ango.

The Centuriones—and one must go back for a moment into the preceding years. The Hundred Years' War had left European commerce and exchange in a completely demoralized state; conclaves of experts, meeting at Bruges, at Cologne, in the Hanseatic towns, at Genoa, trying to restore the financial equilibrium of a continent, devising ways, formulating plans, much in the manner of more recent endeavours under similar circumstances.

And at Genoa, it was the great banking firm of Centurione which achieved the adoption of a gold standard; sending its agents, consequently, into every part of the world to locate and appropriate all the available sources of gold; among them—as Mr. de La Roncière has discovered—the man called Christopher Columbus, employed as scout and prospector; at odds, eventually, with his employers, abandoning them, placing himself and his accumulated knowledge and experience as a col-

lector of gold in the service of Spain; undertaking a voyage in 1492 for the discovery of a passage to the Indies, certainly; but the fundamental motive, perhaps, of that voyage not so much the opening of new trade routes, the discovery of new lands, as a further research for gold, viewed not merely as desirable wealth but as a vital factor in a new economic condition. Not so much, it may be, a voyage of maritime and terrestrial exploration as has been supposed, with gold as a pleasant side issue, but a definite banking enterprise, with gold as the primary object.

Later on, when all financial and mercantile minds, and especially the Italians, were seeking additional routes to Cathay and the Indies—and Jean Ango's ships were trying them all—it was Paolo Centurione who had imagined a shorter transit from India, by way of the Indus, the Caspian Sea, the Volga, Riga and the Baltic; telling Giovanni Verrazano about it, wishing that the Grand Duke of Muscovy would encourage such a venture. And in 1523—when Giovanni Verrazano, at Dieppe, was organizing a tentative easterly voyage to Cathay along the northern shores of that very Muscovy —Gaspar Centurione, captured in a Genoese ship by the French on his way to his brother Matteo's sugar plantations in the Indies, was being brought to Havre and released; applying at once for citizenship at Rouen; sending for his nephews, Vicenzo and Girolamo; very much interested, along with all of his compatriots in France, in the Verrazano undertaking.

It was not a Normandy voyage in conception, this first one; the backers were silk merchants and Florentine bankers of Lyon, led by that Crœsus, Tomassino Guadagni; but with Normandy ships and crews—one of

them Jean Ango's *Normande*—under the patronage and commission of Francis I. A voyage intended to reveal a North East passage to Cathay. And after long delays, many of them caused by the obstruction of Portuguese agents who were convinced that the real destination was Brazil, Giovanni Verrazano sailed—it is not certain whether from Dieppe or from Havre—in June, 1523, with four ships; only to be driven back by northern tempests; seeking shelter in Brittany with his two remaining vessels, the *Normande* and the *Dauphine;* raiding the Spanish coast for a while, perhaps in company with Jean Fleury; then sailing again, in January, 1524, alone in the *Dauphine,* from "the dishabited rock by the isle of Madeira appertaining to the King of Portugal."

Sailing West.

Anxiously trailed on behalf of the Emperor Charles V by the Portuguese Estevan Gomez, a deserter from Magellan's expedition of 1518 through the Straits. Or perhaps himself trailing Gomez. Sailing West—to approximately that part of the North American continent represented by the latitude of Charleston; then down towards Florida; then up all the way North to latitude 50°—a region well known to the Bretons—the first navigator actually to describe, and with very great accuracy, the North Atlantic coast of America, although Giovanni Caboto, in 1498, and Gaspar Corte Real, in 1500, had seen some of it; visiting the sites of New York, and Newport, and Cape Cod; inspecting the Bay of Fundy, the "deep land," Terra Onde, soon to become Rio Fonde; claiming the entire territory from Florida to Labrador as Nova Gallia for France. And home again at Dieppe in July—preparing once more to attempt for

the King the North East passage to Cathay; sponsored this time by Simon le Gras of Troyes and the Viscount of Rouen; forbidden to go at the last moment because all shipping was needed in the Channel for hostilities with England.

As for the American voyage, it was not Cathay, but it was sufficiently remarkable, and it arrested attention; after Magellan's discovery in the far South, it was the most important exploration in the West, revealing long stretches of continuous continent for the cartographer's use. But while the 1527 map of the celebrated Maggiolo of Genoa showed the whole coast as far as Labrador, that of 1525—subsequent nevertheless to the Verrazano voyage—did not. And on the map setting forth his brother's discoveries, issued in 1529 by Girolamo Verrazano, where according to contemporary custom topographical features had received the names of the saints on whose anniversary days they had been seen, some of these names were derived from the summer calendar, not applicable during the voyage of 1524. All this undoubtedly because some of Giovanni Verrazano's observations were made during a *second* voyage to America.

A voyage undertaken in May or June of 1526—and accounting for the sudden improvement in the Maggiolo map of 1527—backed by a company formed, finally, by Jean Ango; consisting of himself, Adam Godefroy of Rouen and others, and the Admiral, Chabot, in whose pockets Portuguese gold was not yet reposing. With four vessels, Godefroy's barque from Fécamp, two of Chabot's galleons and a ship of Jean Ango's; to find a North West passage, for a change, to the Indies. And no report of this venture, but there is the second of those

three voyages to America which Hakluyt had in mind when he spoke of Giovanni Verrazano as having been "thrice on that coast."

And the third was the last. A voyage with five ships in 1528, assumed to have been financed by Jean Ango, presumably towards that South Sea route to the Indies which Magellan had opened. And out there somewhere, eaten alive by natives in South America some said, although others—probably confusing him with Jean Fleury—would have it that the Spaniards had caught him, he perished.

II

He perished, as others had perished, and were still to perish. Life was so very cheap in that fabulous new century, dazzled by dreams of the Indies, of Cathay and Cipangu, and when ships failed to return others went out, without any timidity.

Jean Parmentier, for instance, nosing his way in Ango ships into forbidden Portuguese seas, to Brazil, to Guinea, to the Moluccas around the Cape of Good Hope. A remarkable and very choice person. A poet of renown in his day, winner on several occasions of gold hats and crowns at the annual contests held at Rouen and Dieppe—for they cherished the Muses, those *Renaissance* Normandy seamen—a student and translator of the classics; a maker of maps and planispheres; and one of the greatest navigators of his time. Scholar, geographer, sailor.

And in 1529 Giovanni Verrazano had not returned, and Jean Ango was sending out Jean Parmentier and his brother Raoul, with the two Pierres, Crignon and Mauclerc, in the *Pensée* and the *Sacre,* to those precious

Moluccas. And Jean Parmentier wrote a poem, explaining the voyage, and they sailed, in March, from Dieppe. Some fun at the Line, a baptism, then the Cape, then Madagascar. Then the broad Indian Ocean, and when the sailors were depressed Jean Parmentier wrote another poem for them, reading it to them and heartening them up with his courageous verse. And in October they were at Sumatra, trading until the end of November. And suddenly Jean and Raoul were both dead, a few days apart, of the typhoid. It happened like that—Jean was thirty-five, Raoul thirty—and after a while Pierre Crignon sailed the sorrowful, spice laden ships home.

And in 1531 Jean Parmentier and Raoul were never to return, but with various other worthies Jean Ango —in the midst of his struggle with Portugal—was organizing another voyage to the Moluccas, and not around the Cape of Good Hope, but if possible by way of Magellan's route which the Portuguese wished to keep concealed. And for this purpose one of Magellan's old pilots, a certain Leone Pancaldo, had been hired; but the Portuguese bought him off; Giovanni Venezeano would not go, and without Pancaldo he did not, in any case, know the way; one man after another was thought of, negotiated with, in the end always bribed, intimidated or violenced by the Portuguese spies who crowded the Normandy ports; finally, at Antwerp, Jean Ango got his hands on Pero Fernandez who understood the route, and this time the Portuguese found it imprudent to interfere.

They sailed from Dieppe, so much is known. And perhaps, as has been claimed—but without any corroboration—they reached China, returning in safety.

But wherever they went, and whether or not they returned, one may be very certain that other ships followed, and still others after them.

But there was no end to the wars. In 1543, in a battle honoured with ballads, five Ango ships were smashing nine Flemish, capturing their flagship, the "Little Rooster" of Antwerp. In 1544 there was still war with Spain, and with England besides—and Jean Ango in charge of all maritime operations; arranging, in 1545, for a tremendous naval expedition; procuring the provisions; providing fifteen ships of his own. A superb effort, in his sixty-fifth year—but to no very great purpose, as it turned out, and to his own ruination.

He had put in his fortune, but Francis I, whose "good friend" he was, did not see fit to repay him; at his accession, in 1547, Henry II was not interested. The Kings were ungrateful, and Jean Ango was ruined. And at Dieppe people laughed, and rubbed their hands, and were glad; driving him from his house to the solitary shelter of the castle where he was always Governor; assailing him with lawsuits for prize money; seizing his possessions for judgments. For, Jacques Cœur of the North, it had all gone to *his* head too. During the prosperous years, the years when he had played host to a king and defied an emperor, he had been too proud with his escorts of men at arms; too ostentatious with his homes, and his Italians, and his carvings—magnificent carvings—in the church of Saint Jacques; too haughty with sensitive burghers; too scornful of more humble friends of the past; too dictatorial and violent, given to blows and discourtesies.

And so now he was ruined, despised, abandoned,

not daring to come out of his castle. And in it, in 1551, he died.

12

Jean Ango died, and his captains passed on, leaving the struggle for free seas to other sailors. Sailors from Dieppe and Honfleur, from Bayonne and Bordeaux, from La Rochelle and Nantes. From Saint Malo in Brittany.

Saint Malo, Carcassonne of the sea, solidly rooted to that ancient rock promontory overlooking the Channel and the mouth of the Rance where Saint Aaron, in the sixth century, received Malo the Saint, when he came sailing, miraculously enough, in his stone trough from Wales. Solidly rooted, throughout the centuries; belted with ramparts—the eighteenth century circle has endured—where once stood the Chapel of Our Lady of Great Might, patroness of seamen; compactly fashioned in granite staring down on the steep narrowness of brief winding streets coming from great fortified gates, climbing up to a cathedral church crowning the Rock—but no spire until recent times—clamorous with the deep brazen voice of "Big Malo"; resonant at night for many hundreds of years with the barking of watch dogs, the famous "dogues" of Saint Malo, their effigy for long generations on the seal of the city until replaced by the ermine. The grey, dignified, unperturbable citadel of merchants and mariners.

Mariners from time immemorial; privateers, carriers and especially long distance fishermen; excellent seamen, renowned in the world—their names will recur in these pages—and a tradition, still active in the days of Louis XIV, that the admiral ship of France must

always be manned by Malouins. In the seventeenth century and on into the golden eighteenth, long distance merchantmen too, captains and owners, whole families at a time, one after the other, fathers and sons—and at all times their widows and daughters, *armatrices* of note such as Madame Sauvage, Madame des Prés, Madame du Bourg—Chapdelaines, Gravés, Bossinets, Clémenceaus, Porcons, Fromys, Trouins, Danycans, Eons, Porées, Le Fers, Magons; shrewd, tight fisted fellows, slow with their taxes and royal subscriptions; prone to defraud His Majesty's customs; plain, rough and ready seafaring burghers with a foible for titles of nobility which seldom affected their quarterdeck manners.

Sailing to Arabia, to China, to the West Indies, to India. In the days of the Company. The Company of the East Indies, in 1664; a monopoly with India dispensed by the government, and great warehouses soon filling with Saint Malo's share of merchandise from Madagascar and the Orient. But in 1675 the Company was in trouble, in 1680 again, a new one failing in 1708, and Saint Malo eager to undertake the private management of the enterprise; receiving ministerial permission and monopoly to do so, to the endless annoyance of ports such as Nantes, because at the Ministry, "having cast their eyes upon Messers of Saint Malo," they had found them to be "the most outstanding merchants in the kingdom," the most "mighty and enterprising," with "beautiful and great powerful ships" and "excellent crews." And when in 1719 all of the commercial companies found themselves absorbed into the new Company of the West Indies—soon again to become the Company of the Indies—it was the Malouin *armateur*

houses that were still in successful control, their ships on the sea, although Nantes was the ultimate terminal for the cargoes.

Days of enormous prosperity—increased by the proceeds of a considerable slave trade and privateering activity—days of expansion beyond the girdle of earlier battlements become too restrictive; days that saw the building of the ramparts now standing; the erection—overlooking their southern frontage where they face the harbour and river—of that imposing row of magnificent houses, the homes of the Malouin *armateurs,* which was later to be known as "California" because of the surpassing wealth of its inmates. Great square granite houses, shoulder to shoulder, that have weathered the centuries—and yet their vast two storied cellars were built upon the sands of a reclaimed shore line—tall chimneys in sloping slate roofs, wide stairs so that once a man rode up one on horseback, high twelve foot ceilings in tremendous chambers forty-five feet long, filled with accumulating beauties of woodwork and tapestry. Solid, dignified, stately, reflecting today the light of a glory that passed, but does not quite fade.

Days of enormous prosperity—so that in 1750, when a new "Big Malo" was being cast, the Malouin ladies from "California" were to think nothing of putting jewels and gold into the metal for the bell—the days of the India Company.

And with them, and more fabulous still, perhaps, the days of Peru.

13

The "Interloper Trade" with Peru—so it was always referred to; a matter of grave risks, of great

profits, and of the most solemn domestic and international comedy. A "fat trade," they found it, in the seventeenth century.

It all went back to that odious Spanish economic trick—odious to the French, to the Dutch and the English, and to the Spanish colonies in America themselves—of prohibiting foreign trade with those colonies. But since it was a fat trade as far as France was concerned, in textiles from Normandy and Brittany, in that fine Noyal sail cloth from Rennes, in silks from Lyon and Tours, in stockings, and paper, and beaver hats, these products were quietly taken to Cadiz—for the most part in Saint Malo ships, although Marseille was in on it too from the Levant, and the English and Dutch—there in Cadiz to be blandly placed aboard the Spanish *flotas* bound for America. A brazen, illicit performance, handled ostensibly by Spanish merchants, winked at by Spanish authorities—and when they stopped winking, pursued with the most majestic frauds involving the merchants, the customs, the ships coming in and the fleets going out.

And since there were always tedious Castilian difficulties in connection with this traffic which had no official existence, the French merchants had found it so much more simple, in the face of impotent Spanish restrictions, to establish branches on the spot, organizing themselves into a corporation under the presidency of their Consul. And in particular the Saint Malo merchants, at Cadiz and at Malaga—Malouins hereditary consuls at Malgue, as they called it—and all the best Malouin families sending their sons for apprenticeship, while the Spaniards came up to Saint Malo. The friendliest sort of social and mercantile interchange, the

most intimate associations between Saint Malo and Malgue and Cadiz—and the trade growing fatter and fatter, the merchants more wealthy, the comedy richer.

But still the affair was too complicated, too troublesome and restricted; in the 1680s, buccaneers like Massertie and Ravenau de Lussan were bringing back fantastic reports of the wealth to be had in the Spanish overseas dominions; already in 1667 perhaps, from Rouen, certainly at the close of the century, and principally from Saint Malo, ships were beginning to nose their way directly into the forbidden Southern Sea; carrying French contraband goods for sale in exchange for Peruvian silver and gold; later, as the traffic developed, selling their goods in South American ports, going on to China with their Peruvian silver for a cargo of merchandise to be itself sold in those ports on the return journey, thence home with the proceeds in bullion.

Bullion, the actual metal of coinage, the basis of all national prosperity according to prevailing economic conceptions; and consequently the French government, financially pressed to provide the expenses of costly wars, at first inclined to encourage the trade in spite of ceaseless Spanish complaints. The Company of the East Indies, indeed, numbering the Southern Sea among its monopolies, and when it failed to avail itself of the privilege, a new company formed, the China Company; and in 1698 still another one, the Company of the Southern Seas or the Royal Company of the Pacific Sea, founded by Jean Jourdain of Paris and the great Noël Danycan, shipowner of Saint Malo. And later, a new China Company, a combination of companies—one may not presume to follow the intricacies

and collapses of these governmental and purely commercial ventures—with Noël Danycan and his Malouin colleagues always the principal promoters of a more successful private participation enlisting the support of other *armateurs* such as the Bishop of Nantes, and destined to carry the enterprise to a climax of prosperous comedies.

And in 1698, one of the first of the Company expeditions was leaving, from La Rochelle; a corps of cadets, with colonists and artisans, all on a grand scale; organized and commanded by Mr. de Gennes, assisted by Jouhan de la Gilbaudière, an old buccaneer companion of Massertie, a veteran of innumerable exploits who had once sailed home from the Straits of Magellan in a small boat made from the wreckage of his ship. But the Company funds were lacking, dissensions arose while the colonizing schemes were abandoned, and the gambling cadets caroused in the taverns, scandalizing the Huguenot town, threatening to burn Mr. de Roddes, the Company agent, in his room; Mr. de Gennes withdrew, appalled by the fracas, and the expedition was turned over, after difficult persuasion, to a Malouin captain of privateers, Gouin de Beauchesne.

He sailed, in December, with four ships, accompanied by the Count of Maurepas; winning through to the Pacific with only two vessels, after six months of fearful hardships and bitter weather in the unfamiliar Straits. Something which later ships were not to endure, for French captains in the Peruvian trade were soon, and the first, to realize the lesser difficulties of the Horn, and to make use without mishaps of that hitherto supposedly more terrible passage—one of them, in 1708, being the first to sail straight from the Horn to the

Cape of Good Hope. And in the Pacific, in 1699, Gouin de Beauchesne sent Maurepas on to Valdivia, where after gunfire and parley he was invited to dinner, and pressed to anchor near the fort. Much too near, for when he was about to return the Spaniards' hospitality, the batteries let loose, so that he was just able to cut his cables and run out to sea, there to meet his commander.

Spanish welcome, and the French ships unwilling to risk displeasure in France by an attack on the town. They sailed on up the coast, cold shouldered intruders, until at last at Arica the merchants made signs and arrangements—and a Viceroy always protesting, then and on all future occasions, threatening violence that never materialized, and no doubt conniving, evidently bribed to a turn. A Viceroy who died in Peru leaving a fortune of fourteen million piasters; and his family, for some reason, preferring to remain in Peru; and the Spanish government very curious eventually concerning these fabulous piasters, and suggesting that at least a million of them be handed over to the Crown.

The French sold their goods, at Arica and elsewhere, with the collusion of local merchants and officials; a contraband system perfecting itself during the course of subsequent voyages, until it had become a very high comedy indeed; sometimes of ostensibly storm driven entering ships and carefully reticent merchants, or of furious authorities saving their faces with dire paradings of troops—one splendid fraud or another—and at night, in the warehouses, a surreptitious opening of bales, a passing of bundles through doors, a public pretence of evasion and secrecy. Paper, and stockings, and textiles, and beaver hats in return for the ingots.

And as for Gouin de Beauchesne, in 1701 he was home, around the Horn, with four hundred thousand *livres* of bullion—and for the first time a French vessel had followed the entire western coast of South America, bringing back observations which hydrographers such as Godalle and Griffon of Saint Malo were to incorporate into a new and much improved cartography of those regions.

A very high comedy out in Peru, and also at home during those periods—from 1701 to 1705, and again after 1712—when for changing reasons of diplomacy the Spanish complaints were upheld and the trade "absolutely" prohibited; although even then the restrictive measures were frequently half hearted and almost always inadequate—the trade was never fatter than in 1705—their application purposely impaired by port officials generally hostile to the Minister of the day and his methods. And the King had a way of closing his eye to alleged voyages of discovery.

But still there was danger—danger of seizure, at sea by the Spaniards, and by the sheriffs from Versailles —and at the Ministry the eye was not closed, the "King's Eye" in the "Black Closet" that intercepted all suspected correspondence, and stared with embarrassing fixity at the goings on in Saint Malo, and in Havre, and Brest, and Nantes, and Marseille for that matter. Sudden departures, a crew signed on secretly without reference to the naval authorities, a false destination announced—so many ships for the West Indies—the name of the vessel repeatedly changed, false logbooks aboard and false ledgers ashore. And sometimes a fine kettle of fish—in 1713, for instance, Julien Bourdas arrested, spending some three hundred days in the Bas-

tille, while Saint Malo seethed and the sheriffs ransacked his home, and his office, his books and his trunks.

14

In twenty odd years ninety-two Malouin ships to Peru; perhaps some two hundred French vessels all told, bringing back bullion to the extent, possibly, of two hundred and fifty million *livres*—which would have been equivalent approximately to seven hundred million francs in 1907—although contemporaries placed the total amount much higher, at four hundred million *livres*. And profits to the *armateurs* of from eighty to a hundred and twenty per cent.

Although to listen to them in their official declarations it would seem that the amount of bullion imported was only one hundred and twenty-five million *livres*—and a constant comedy there, too, of fraud and concealment; bullion withheld from the mint, run out of the country again to more profitable investments, hidden in those granite cellars of "California" at Saint Malo, until every house in the quarter was reputed to hold its hidden treasure. Legends more credible, certainly, than that other legend concerning the Malouin convoy of thirty millions presented to the King in his need, with Noël Danycan topping the list with fourteen millions, whereas actually the greatest amount forcibly "borrowed" on that occasion by the Treasury was not more than fifteen millions, and perhaps not all of it ever received. For they were a tight fisted lot, those Malouin *armateurs,* rendering nothing to Cæsar that could possibly be avoided, and Noël Danycan the greatest contriver of subterfuges among them.

A fat trade, but it had to come to an end. Already

forbidden, and the prohibition maintained with the accession of Louis XV, the new Ordinance of Marly (1716) pronounced penalty of death on all infringing captains.

At Saint Malo they thought it a gesture at first, then they asked that a ship, the *Saint François,* be sent to Peru to inform the captains. The *Saint François* sailed —and immediately attached herself to the trading fleet, and the traffic went on, high handed and confident, resorting to bombardment and armed coercion in the case of recalcitrant towns. But in Spain the comedy was played out—the foreign policy of France and the Spanish slave trade "Asiento" to England entered into it too—and since the Spanish navy was completely disorganized at the time, with France providing the escorts for the silver galleons, ships were purchased from France, some from Saint Malo itself, manned with French crews and placed under the command of Jean Martinet, royal navy.

He sailed in December, 1716, from Cadiz, preceded to Peru by the French frigate *Bellone,* gone to warn the impudent captains again; but it was not until Jean Martinet swooped down on Arica in August, seizing five Malouin ships with fifteen millions in bullion, that the captains decamped. A revival for a while in 1719, during the war with Spain; then the Ordinance of Marly renewed, in 1724.

The "Interloper Trade" with Peru was over; but the Company of the Indies remained, and great warehouses at Nantes still to be filled with Malouin cargoes.

15

Nantes, on the Loire river—home of the Namnetes in Gallo-Roman ages—a maritime city from the earliest

times, growing up among its islands and along the "Trench," the *Fosse* as it came to be called, facing the northern branch of the river; preserving to-day, in some of its waterfront aspects, the trace of its solid eighteenth century mercantile magnificence; a city of delicate wrought iron balconies gracing the massive alignment of columned facades, ornamented with stone figures and faces, grotesque Neptunes and Tritons who witnessed the passing of the Vendée uprising, the solemn processional of Mr. de Charette to his death, the bloody insanities of the unspeakable Carrier, in the days of the Terror.

A maritime mercantile city, allying itself commercially, in 1428, with Bilbao, in Spain. A curious association, partly religious in its origins, under the name of the Brotherhood of the *Contractation* with its headquarters in the Cordelier convent at Nantes, which was to endure for some three hundred years; providing traffic monopolies and mutual privileges of assembly and joint deliberation in the two cities, the Society at Bilbao constituting the Chamber of Commerce; productive of social relations similar to those existing between Saint Malo and Cadiz, all the great names in Nantes on the registers of the Society, sojourning at Bilbao, welcoming on the Loire the visits of Spanish merchants, the permanent settlement along the *Fosse* of such families as the Ruyses and Darquistades; counterparts of those foreign families of the seventeenth century, and especially the Dutch—Macnamaras, Haveloozes, Verbrugges, Vanherzeeles—settled at Nantes, amalgamating their houses, interchanging their apprentices, intermarrying their children.

A quite special and distinct maritime mercantile aris-

tocracy forming at Nantes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, flowering in the early eighteenth. A rich mixture of foreign strains and the old native families, Hautevilles, Delaselles, du Hallays, des Cazeauxs, Laurencins, Montaudoins. Merchant captains and shipowners, importers, dealers in wholesale trading "behind closed doors without name plates or signs." Proud, dignified, fastidious personages, conscientious and honest, respecting their calling; enterprising and reckless when it suited their prudence, canny and cautious, slow to be pushed by any governmental blandishments into ventures that did not appeal to their profound practical sense; always disgruntled on the surface, doleful public decriers of the most manifest and extensive prosperity; hostile to royal authority, stubborn upholders of their civic privileges and offices, lords of the town; ostentatious builders and embellishers; doomed in advance, with their wealth and their state, to a sweeping revolutionary destruction at the close of the century.

Building along the *Fosse,* along the Quai Brancas, upon the islands opposite; the Dutch in particular, in the 1730s, on Saulzaie island, renamed the Ile Feydeau; a new quarter opened up by the great mayor, Mellier, where land could be had for a promise to establish wharves and erect residences conforming to the accepted plans of the city. The elegant stone houses of "Little Holland"—Carrier was to occupy one of the finest—with their formidable portals, their wide stretch of tall windows and pediments under steeply sloping roofs, and the Neptunes and Tritons supporting the flowing curvatures of balconies. Elegant houses, fallen to-day from their very high estate, shifting and sinking in a treacherous fluvial soil, but an echo still remain-

ing in the silent, secretive streets between them, a faint animation upon their impassive countenances, from an ancient splendour.

16

A splendour derived in the first place, but in restricted degree, from the operations of the Company of the East Indies. A great ministerial interest in Nantes on behalf of the Company; a very lukewarm response of seafaring participation on the part of those financially unemotional burghers; a very slight confidence in the prospects of a Company which from the beginning was never very well managed until the Malouins put their private hands and their ships to it.

But for long years the Company warehouses were at Nantes; in spite of Malouin machinations—a very great rivalry between Nantes and Saint Malo, and armed conflict at times between their respective vessels—in spite of the Ministry's attempt, in 1666, artificially to create a Company town at L'Orient, the Orient, now Lorient, as a site for its storage and sales. For the merchants refused to go there, no doubt preferring the excellent comfort of such universally renowned Nantes hostelries as the "Great Monarch" and *Pelican;* and in 1693 the Company installed its buildings and docks on the Loire, there to remain until 1733, when envious intrigues caused a final return to Lorient. Forty years during which Nantes was the receiver of cargoes—goods landed at Saint Malo, at La Rochelle, at nearby Lorient, carried coastwise or overland to the official depot at additional expense, in accordance with the rigid Company system of that day—Nantes the prescribed scene of the annual fairs to which hundreds of mer-

chants from all over the country must come for their India wares.

Every year, for five or six weeks, a great seething bazaar; the auction amphitheatre crowded, a rush always for the front rows, scuffles and disorders when others had paid people to hold them against the local bidders, for that was not allowed; outside in the hall, a great sampling of goods, and the home people more in the know, friendly with bankers and officials, in a better position to discover the true condition of bales, to procure ready money, to profit from the constant smuggling and leakage—for while they were honest, they were never silly about it, the merchants of Nantes.

A great commercial importance attaching to Nantes, a very great wealth accruing—and other advantages to which one will have to return—but its shipping persistently inactive in the affairs of the Company, the several Companies. Because of monopolies, because of a network of taxes and dues, because of Saint Malo, because of the Companies themselves. The well intentioned Companies, so dear to the heart of the great Minister, Colbert, by means of which he hoped to revive a national maritime commerce hard hit by the wars, to foster and systematize it; stifling it instead in a blanket of rules, and red tape, and minute injunctions; killing initiative with a tyranny of governmental supervision; treating the merchants to a discipline of bureaucracy; striving constantly, for that was his nature, for an arbitrary machinery of automatic perfection, without sufficient regard for the processes of time, and habit, and human nature.

Companies of the Indies, of the North, of the Levant, of Africa, of the Mediterranean. Tremendous

monopolies, whole sections of the globe at a time, India, China, Africa, South America; tremendous privileges, the right to raise navies and armies, the right to name magistrates, the right to make treaties; tremendous capital—on paper; soon a tremendous ballyhoo of propaganda and speculation; a tremendous drive for subscriptions, in many instances a coercion of funds by the Minister, a positive extortion of funds when he wrote people down on the books dictatorially until the thing was become like a tax; then so often, in spite of it all, a failure of funds—for the Company of the East Indies only nine millions received of the fifteen called for—disputes and dilemmas, loan following loan, indecisions and changes of policy, private interests invading the field, and in the end a welter of lawsuits.

At Nantes they inspected these matters and found them distasteful, contrary to their business convictions, contrary above all to their fundamental sense of mercantile freedom. Hopelessly impractical, in any case; too many rules, too many restrictions; "submissions," for instance, signed in advance, guaranteeing the duration of a voyage, assuming heavy fines in the event of delays beyond a not very adequate limit, as though one could count on the winds and the waters. More and more, Nantes turned away from the Company enterprises—scarcely a local ship from the port—looking for different traffics. Peru to a certain extent, Guinea, the West Indies. The West Indies, the "Islands of America," where Company interference was not so active.

The West Indies, Guinea.

And little by little the thing took form, and spread, and flourished, assisted by the facility offered by the

India fairs for procuring the staples of commerce necessary for the trade, and in particular the *cauri* shells valued so highly in Guinea. The thing took form, the slave trade from Guinea with India goods to the Islands, and West Indian products in return, sugar, coffee, tobacco, indigo. The Islands—there was prosperity, there was the opportunity for their maritime endeavour, there were the words that were to become the universal chorus in Nantes, and the slave trade the basis of the whole structure. Ebony wood, as they called it.

More than any other port in France, Nantes was to be the home of the African slave trade; ebony wood its specialty, the principal source of its *armateur* wealth, since it was the key to the Islands. The "city of the slavers," as Mr. Michelet has written.

17

It was an utterly respectable trade, of course—one must not fail to appreciate the contemporary attitude—much sought after by all maritime nations, only at Nantes it became the very essence of mercantile life, the chosen activity of a whole city of shipowners intent on developing a monopoly of their own with the Islands, the cause of "universal joy" in the town whenever some additional privilege affecting the trade was acquired.

In 1716, especially, when after some thirty years of relations with the Company of Guinea the slave trade was thrown open, with special concessions to Nantes—and to Bordeaux, La Rochelle and Rouen—which it continued in varying degrees to enjoy in "permitted" ships after the new Company of the Indies had again

partly closed the traffic. For the next fifteen years, a tripling, a quadrupling of trade with the Islands; in 1733, after the removal of the India fairs to Lorient, until the Seven Years' War—and again after the peace in 1763—a hundred ships a year to Guinea, to Martinique, to *Saint Domingue;* two score of shipowners and merchant captains sailing out of Nantes, the generation of the Kervegans and Delavilles, led by Jean Delaville who owns a fleet of ten vessels, maintains branches at London and Amsterdam, and puts seven hundred thousand *livres* of his money on the sea in one season.

In the closing decade of the century, while the Revolution was preparing, the splendour at its highest in that last brilliant noontime which was already the twilight of the Islands' traffic. The day of the Planters, *armateur* plantation owners residing in Nantes, on the Place Royale and around the Exchange and the Theatre —the Grous, the La Villetreuxs who keep three hundred thousand *livres* of ready cash in the house—stately personages, enormously rich, entrusting their children to fat Martinique negresses, sending their household linen across the sea to be washed in the more whitening water of *Saint Domingue.* The grandees of Nantes.

Closely pressed at all times and increasingly towards the end, in the Islands and even in the matter of ebony wood, by the grandees of ancient Bordeaux—Roman terminal of commerce with Britain, mediæval capital of the wine trade, eighteenth century centre of noteworthy shipbuilding, of constant maritime activity with England, with Holland, with Russia, with Africa, with the Indies, outdistancing Nantes in the number of its ships to the Islands—grandees of great pride and

wealth, prone to an opulence of worldly enjoyments that never diminished their mercantile energy. Balgueries, Gradises, Nayracs, Bonnaffés; François Bonnaffé foremost among them, Bonnaffé the Lucky, broker's clerk, speculator, fortune maker, crowning his career as an *armateur* with fifteen millions and twenty-three houses. And in America, at Philadelphia since 1776, another Bordelese boy, apprentice, speculator, armer of ships, who was to be known as Stephen Girard.

The Islands—glamorous name; household name to five generations of children, the place where your big ships came from with all the sweet smelling things, the place where your uncles and brothers went to, where you expected to go some day to see for yourself all the wonders your nurse had regaled you with, grinning under her great gaudy bandana; familiar name, in the streets, in the shops, on the wharves; potent name, in the counting houses and banks; heart breaking name, symbol of absence and separation, of the passing of years and the perils of seamen. A part of your life, of the air that you breathed and the houses you lived in, of your welfares and griefs.

Magical name that the Loire will always be whispering as it goes down by the *Fosse,* while the Neptunes and Tritons keep puffing their obstinate cheeks, entreating the winds from the West.

18

Nantes and Bordeaux, the Loire and Gironde rivers, queens of the ocean—but between them another river, the Charente, and two provinces, Poitou and Saintonge; a coastal region of marshes, and islands,

and bays, cradle for centuries of a population of seamen—builders of ships for Julius Cæsar when he went against the Venetes—seamen and maritime merchants closely associated with Flanders and England; remote, obstreperous fellows, prone to revolt at the slightest infringement of local privileges and foreign commercial relations which at various times they held in greater esteem than their abstract allegiance to the internal realm of France. And in a corner of Saintonge opposite the Island of Ré, in the "Land of Aunis" granted in 1372 by the sailor King Charles V, a quiet white city of arcaded streets, La Rochelle, stronghold of the seafaring Huguenots.

Founded by Julius Cæsar, so the claim has been made—its fortress known originally as Chatel Aiglon, the Castle of the Eaglet, in reference to the Roman emblem—built up among the marshes by fishermen, enriched by the traffic of mariners, the fortified city was already in the twelfth century remarkably prosperous, the wealth of its merchants a byword, considered by contemporaries enormously wicked, a second Tyre, proud and accursed. The home of such *armateurs* as Alexandre Aufrédi, who sent his ten ships on a mysterious voyage "beyond the sun"—to the West, it must be, in the late 1190s, but how far to the West one may not surmise—who lost all his money when his ships failed to return, and won it all back again when they unexpectedly did—returned from the West, on a long, long voyage, in 1203—and who in that year of thanksgiving, established a hospital which still stands. But the voyage is lost.

Joined to France in 1226, the city was to see all its charters continued, new prerogatives added from

reign to reign in return for high services—"immense services," Charles V called them—for the Rochellese burghers never gave anything away. But one has already looked at them during the Hundred Years' War, faithful and staunch, refuge of Normandy sailors, holding the sea; after Poitiers, in 1356, beseeching the King not to dispose of them to England, for as Froissart records it, "they would prefer being taxed every year one-half of what they were worth, rather than be in the hands of the English"; agreeing at last to acknowledge the English "with their lips," but "the heart would never be in it"; getting rid of them, finally, in 1372, ousting them from the town, tearing down the castle—so that His Majesty of France could not occupy it either. Confirming their franchises, French and English, before admitting his soldiery. An elected municipality, and the mayors and echevins soon endowed with hereditary nobility; the right to mint money; the militia exempted from service beyond the walls, the city itself entitled to refuse entry to any armed force whatsoever. The Land of Aunis distinct from the kingdom, directly dependent upon the King and the Parliament. A state growing up within the State; a free city in the West, nurtured in political isolation, reared to a tenacious habit of wilfulness and independence; preoccupied wholly with affairs of the sea.

The soil in which Protestantism was suddenly to take root.

19

It is naturally not the purpose of this volume to discuss the details, the causes or the mutual responsi-

bilities, or any careful chronology of the Protestant-Catholic struggle in France, of the religious wars that prostrated the country for a period of more than sixty years, leaving it fit for nothing, on sea and land, of the political persecutions which overwhelmed the Huguenots more than fifty years later. But some reference to these matters is inevitable, some setting forth of those ancient animosities and reprisals, in order to appreciate even the maritime history of La Rochelle during those years. For La Rochelle was inevitably to be the citadel of citadels of the Huguenots, its tower Lantern the beacon of Calvinism in France.

It had taken root, the new religion, very early in Saintonge and Aunis; in 1542 already at La Rochelle, so that a dozen years later it was firmly established, claiming echevins and royal magistrates for its devotees; in 1546 on the Island of Oléron; more slowly in the inland regions of Saintonge, but with great rapidity among its "Islands"; the islands in the sea, and the hilltop "islands" rising from the marshes; nursery of rugged seamen, pirates and corsairs, singing terrors of the West Indian seas whom one will see at work on a later page; for they were almost always seamen, the Huguenots—merchants, artisans and seamen—and they were always singing, on their island hilltops, and all across the ocean, and in the furthest jungles, the thundering psalms of Béza and Marot.

The wars began, in 1562, with violence and desecration on both sides, and at once La Rochelle became the camp, the refuge and the Court of Protestantism. In 1568, the Prince of Condé and Admiral de Coligny were there, Jeanne d'Albret was there with her son, the young King of Navarre, one day to be Henry IV

of France; there was a great intellectual activity, a great printing of books, and a great stir of warfare. La Rochelle in possession of the Islands of Ré and Oléron, in control of Poitou and Saintonge; Rochellese raiders punishing the shipping of Bordeaux and Nantes for millions; the Protestant vessels commanded by Jacques de Sores, one of those singing terrors of the West Indies, fearfully renowned for his capture and ruthless destruction of Havana, with massacre and sacrilege, in 1555.

Then defeats; the Prince of Condé murdered; his son, Henri de Condé and young Henri de Navarre, the cousins, looked upon as the new leaders; Saintonge lost to the Huguenots; the army cooped up in La Rochelle; the army cutting its way out under François de La Noue; Saintonge regained; the Rochellese fleet on the coast, beating the Baron de La Garde, Admiral of the galleys of France, bombarding Brouage with the *Grande Huguenote;* in 1570, a "pacification," La Rochelle set aside as one of the Huguenot "sanctuaries," scorning offers from Germany of incorporation into the Empire; the sister of Charles IX of France to marry the King of Navarre; in August, 1572, all Huguenotdom at the wedding in Paris, and Saint Bartholomew's Eve—a political massacre far more than religious—and the Henris of Condé and Navarre escaping by abjuring their faith.

Saint Bartholomew's Eve, and massacres all over France—at Rouen, at Bourges, at Toulouse, at Lyon—thousands of refugees pouring into La Rochelle; at Brouage, the Admiral of the galleys and Philippe Strozzi assembling a mysterious naval expedition, already many times postponed, which the Rochel-

lese were convinced was destined to the prearranged destruction of their city, just as they were also convinced that the massacres had been deliberately organized.

A commotion, immediately, of warlike preparations, of defensive fortifications and provisioning; the great bastions of the Gospel and Epistle to the North, where the brunt of attack by land must be sustained, the harbour protected by chains slung from one to the other of the guardian towers that stand to this day; the King's conciliation opposed; in November, a royal galley captured by the Protestant ships. François de La Noue, foremost of the surviving Huguenot captains, held in the greatest esteem by both Protestants and Catholics, sent into the city by the royal commander outside for a last effort at negotiations; refused admittance at first, then received, but his proposals rejected, condemned by a passionate Huguenot clergy; himself permitted to take his departure to England, to remain in a private capacity or to assume command of the town. Remaining as general with the consent of his opponents, curiously enough, because of their faith in his moderation and good sense, his ability to dissuade any hopeless resistance.

And in December the siege was declared.

By land and by sea; fifteen hundred cannon balls a day from sixty big pieces, nine frantic attacks on the bastions in February; the outer harbour blocked by the Fort of the Needle, so called, a vessel filled with stones sunk at the entrance, impregnably manned with artillery and troops; in the royal camp, attendance required under pain of forfeiture of nobiliar privileges,

and a great concourse of princes and dukes, Anjou and Alençon of the Blood, Nevers, Mayenne, Guise and Aumale—the latter to perish in March, in one of the assaults—and the converted youngsters of Condé and Navarre constrained to be present. In the town, some three thousand armed men—and the women to help with the "Censer," the swinging cauldron for boiling oil and pitch used to defend the Gospel bastion, soon to be known as the Lion's Den—a sufficiency of general supplies, but not very much wheat; the hope of relief from Elizabeth's England; and the fanatical exhortation of fifty Calvinist ministers. The furious belligerency of the Calvinist ministers, upbraiding François de La Noue the conciliator, one of them striking him, so that in March he withdrew, returning to the royal headquarters.

Hunger and misery, battle and prayer; but a miraculous plenty of cockle shells on the beach; a spirited continuance of intellectual and public entertainment within the walls; a fine sortie by Arnault du Halde with a few men in a small boat, coming back through the blockade with powder and grain; and in England, Elizabeth looking the other way while the Huguenot Count of Montgomery—the one who had accidentally killed Henry II of France in a tournament—gathering fifty-three rather nondescript vessels with money from England and Flanders. But they failed to get through, and Elizabeth's official gaze frowned on the "pirates" whom she nevertheless refused to surrender. April and May, and the siege went on—and others at Montauban, Sancerre and Nîmes—and everyone weary and sick; and Anjou chosen to be King of Poland; and endless intrigues; and in June,

1573, the end of the business, the siege abandoned, and peace.

The siege abandoned, freedom of worship guaranteed and exemption from royal garrisons conceded at La Rochelle, and at Montauban and Nîmes—but not at Sancerre where the eight months' siege dragged on until August, under conditions of the most appalling famine, the inhabitants reduced to horses, and dogs, and mice, then to parchments and drum heads, then to harness, and hides, and bones.

Peace—and in 1574 they were all at it again, the fifth of eight increasingly political wars, partisan quarrels which the Rochellese merchant burghers never failed to make use of in order to damage their Catholic rivals, sweeping the seas with their privateers from Spain to Calais—the Duke of Guise had taken it from the English in 1558—incurring the "uttermost limits" of Malouin naval reprisals. La Rochelle still the stronghold and rallying place, refuge of Henry of Navarre after his return to Protestantism in 1576, of Henry of Condé in 1577; energetic supporter of the King of Navarre become King of France in 1589—Henry IV, the "right good friend of the Rochellese"—equipping ships for him against the Spaniards while he won back his kingdom from the Catholic Holy League; maintained in its liberties in 1593, when for the sake of a unified France he returned once again to Catholicism.

And in 1598, the Edict of Nantes, healing all breaches, religious and political—for a while.

20

France was ruined, commerce destroyed, the navy in pieces, thousands on thousands of seamen gone into

foreign service. Still, at La Rochelle, in Saintonge, they managed to preserve the elements of a maritime prosperity, engaging in voyages of colonization and discovery, maintaining their seafaring Huguenot reputation.

But in 1610 all the fat in the fire again, with the assassination of Henry IV and the accession of Louis XIII, in his minority. The princes in revolt, Condés, Rohans, Soubises; Saintonge up in arms in 1615 against the King; fighting on land and sea; Captain Blanquet raiding the shipping of Bordeaux, bringing Brouage vessels into La Rochelle—a crack at Brouage whenever possible—until his capture and execution; in 1620, a great Huguenot rally at La Rochelle, the old political party revived, the city once more the stronghold and hornet's nest of partisan commotion.

And in 1621, Jean Guiton, a Rochellese *armateur* and official—an impetuous and tempestuous, decisive little man, descended from a family of echevins and mayors—placed in command of the Rochellese fleet, with Samuel Macquin, his partner, as Vice Admiral, Jacques Forant, of the Island of Ré, as Rear Admiral, along with his brother-in-law, André David, and Théophile Vigier and others, as captains. Jean Guiton, "that poor devil of a merchant," had never been in a warship, but soon he was out, all up and doing, blocking the Brouage channel—of course—or trying to; failing, however, to prevent a junction off the Island of Ré between the royal Mediterranean galleys and the Channel squadron under the Duke of Guise, Admiral of France.

And in October, 1622, they met, first in front of Saint

Martin de Ré, the King's navy and the merchants. Seventy-two royal ships, including the three and four hundred ton *Marguerite* and *Saint Louis;* fifty-six Rochellese, their admiral ship of four hundred tons, the others much smaller. A furious affair, the Huguenots in three divisions—some of them too close to the shoals—attacking the Brouage squadron under Saint Luc, pressing Admiral de Guise who had thundered in alone to help Saint Luc's people; but at nightfall Jean Guiton had to withdraw, with two thousand dead and ten of his ships sunk. For the next several days, with accompanying tempests, they battled each other; and Samuel Macquin was drowned; and always the merchants fought like "wild boars," while the royal Admiral pounded them to pieces. Then "peace" was declared—it had already been signed for some time—and Jean Guiton submitted, placing his banner at the feet of the Admiral who gave it back, telling him that it had not been won in combat, and that "you are brave fellows to have dared to fight so valiantly." And a royal salute of seven guns for the Rochellese ships returning to port; and a new vessel with artillery for Jean Guiton from his welcoming city.

But there was no peace. The Rohans and Soubises would not have it; there was a new man at Versailles, a Cardinal Richelieu, strengthening the navy, purchasing ships, and to Saintonge it could only mean peril for them. In 1625, the Prince of Soubise was raiding Le Blavet, seizing some of the recently acquired royal ships—part of that famous "Christian Militia" intended originally for service against the Turks—pillaging in the Loire, pillaging in the Gironde; and the Protestants solemnly disavowing his actions; the Cardi-

nal on his side was appealing to his Protestant allies, to England and Holland, for additional shipping; his appeals reluctantly complied with—although the Dutch were not quite so reluctant after the Prince of Soubise had stupidly burned their vice admiral ship; the new Admiral of France, the Duke of Montmorency, in September, was landing troops under Jean de Toiras on the Island of Ré.

And again Jean Guiton was out, with the Rochellese fleet, against Admiral de Montmorency. But this time nine of his ships, gone aground, are captured by assault; his flagship, attacked by five vessels, is taken deck by deck, until her sailors blow her up with seven hundred dead, and the explosion spreading to the five assailants; the Prince of Soubise makes his escape to England; Jean Guiton himself, in a small boat, reaches La Rochelle in his shirt, "without doublet, hose, cloak or sword"—and very coolly received with "unjust calumnies."

A smashing defeat for those brash Huguenots; but the Cardinal is not ready; the Dutch have called back their ships, English opinion favours the Protestants; Charles I of England is interceding; and again, in February, 1626, there is "peace."

21

A peace upset, primarily perhaps, by a fresh European alignment; France and Spain now hostile to England; Charles I, with his eye on the Cardinal's new navy, going to war with France in 1627 on the plea of assisting the Huguenots, allowing himself to be pushed into it by the Rochellese deputies in England, grouped

around the Prince of Soubise. In July, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord High Admiral of England, surprising Jean de Toiras in the citadel of Saint Martin de Ré, on the island—calling on him, with gifts, to surrender—with forty-two ships and forty-eight transports, four thousand sailors and seven thousand soldiers, among them three thousand Huguenots under Lieutenant General of Infantry de Soubise.

But Jean de Toiras—with gifts in return—refused to surrender; La Rochelle dickered and delayed; the siege of Ré went on; in most courteous fashion, the English Duke sending the enemy wounded across to the mainland in boats of his own, ornamented with crimson and furnished with musicians; in most critical fashion for the starving French who in September were living on water—while the Cardinal stormed, and the Rochellese finally made up their complicated minds; an alliance with England proclaimed, oddly enough, with expressions of affection for France, and Jean Guiton nearly drowned in a boat sunk by gunfire when returning from his interview with the English.

The siege went on; in most unsuccessful fashion for the besiegers; for on the night of October 7, just as Jean de Toiras was at the end of his water, there was a crashing of ships through the blockading fleet—twenty-nine ships out of thirty-five that attempted it, led by Captain d'Andoins of Bayonne—and a shouting of battle cries, "Long live the King! To pass or to die!" And in the morning the English could see a procession of pikes on the walls of Saint Martin de Ré, pikes bearing "a plenty of bottles of wine, capons, India roosters, hams, beef tongues and other provisions." And a month or so later the Duke of Buckingham had

departed, with his ships, and his sick, and the Prince of Soubise.

And now, in October, the King was there with his musketeers; the Cardinal was there with his armaments; the time had come to settle the affairs of La Rochelle—"that Rochelle [which] has always been the heart, the prime mover, and will be the ultimate mover, of all factions and rebellions"; the "boulevard of Calvinism . . . the citadel of revolt," according to Father Joseph, the Eminence in Grey, head of the French Capuchin religious and commercial missions in the Orient.

La Rochelle alone against the King, for Saintonge had not risen; on land a besieging circle of thirteen forts erected by Marshal de Bassompierre; on the water side, in November, a great stone sea wall going up to close the harbour, tremendously fortified, reinforced with ships afloat and aground joined together with chains; two hundred and fifty of them—and still the Rochellese captains got through from time to time with despatches from England. The royal camp, in April, 1628—after earlier epidemics and confusions—well organized and disciplined, promptly supplied, the Cardinal everywhere, drilling, reviewing, inspecting, while the King came and went. A policy of economy in lives and munitions, of reliance on the passage of time.

In the town—blockaded actually since July, isolated in November—a renewed alliance with England; but the citizens, with that strange, paradoxical loyalty of theirs, have been offering daily prayers for the welfare of the King of France, and thanksgiving when on one occasion he escaped death from one of their cannon

balls; a beginning of hunger, and a desperate watch for the English; and on April 30 Jean Guiton chosen as Mayor and Captain of the Town; chosen by the turbulent sailor element in opposition to the more sensible burghers, by the party of uncompromising resistance, to be the violently autocratic embodiment of belligerent obstinacy unto the bitterest ends; echo of those Rochellese deputies in England who were soon sending word to stop feeding the children, so that food might be saved for the fighting men.

And in May an English fleet was in sight; and the Rochellese expecting the English to smash their way in, the English expecting the Rochellese to come out—and the fleet sailing away a week later with nothing accomplished. But at last, in October, a hundred English ships before La Rochelle again, with five thousand troops; and a message from Jean Guiton, "Hurry up, in God's name!" But only a useless bombardment; a futile launching of fire rafts; a lumbering engagement with the Valencay squadron; and the English driven away, parading footlessly about in the offing while La Rochelle strained its despairing eyes, hanging around until the end of the siege and then vanishing, prodigiously discomfited.

It was the end. Disease and famine—in La Rochelle they had been eating mice, and slugs, and grass, plaster, and straw, and glue, sawdust and leather scraps fried in soot—out of some thirty thousand inhabitants, *twenty-five thousand* had perished, their bodies lying in heaps under the silent arcades of the streets, while Jean Guiton pounded his fist and refused to surrender.

But now he surrendered, in the fifteenth month of

the siege, and when Louis XIII came into the city—his supply trains had preceded him—they were waiting on their knees to receive him, the five thousand survivors, hailing him as their saviour. "I forgive you your rebellions," he told them. "If you are good and faithful subjects to me, I will be good prince to you." They were to have life and property, and religious freedom—and as for Jean Guiton, it seemed to him that "I would rather obey the King [of France] who was able to take La Rochelle, than the [English] one who was not able to defend it," and after being kept in disgrace for a while he was finally admitted into the royal service. Clemency and good will for those five thousand unfortunate scarecrows—but for the city, for the political trouble maker which had been La Rochelle, a complete destruction of its military and civic existence; its arms confiscated, its walls erased, except on the sea front, its franchises and independent liberties abolished.

After many hundreds of years there was nothing left but the Protestant faith, a town of the dead, some towers overlooking the sea—and that sea itself, calling to men who were still the descendants of merchants and mariners, singing Huguenot seamen.

22

The sea calling; but the port was in dreadful condition, the harbour filling up as a result of the Cardinal's sea wall—it was not until 1720 that any real improvements could be undertaken, with royal financial assistance, not until 1740 that they began to make themselves felt—and it was a long time before the city could recover its maritime and commercial strength. But

always it remained, religiously, the Huguenot stronghold, the "Western Geneva" as it was said; and with the early years of the reign of Louis XIV, after 1643, some degree of returning prosperity had already been achieved.

For it was not only in La Rochelle, but everywhere else along the coast, that the national foreign trade was come into the hands of the Huguenot merchants and *armateurs,* of their captains and pilots, in consequence of their notorious aptitude for such matters; because they were "bad Catholics but excellent men of business"; because "all our sea ports are filled with Huguenot captains, pilots and merchants who, their souls being entirely engrossed in navigation and commerce, attain greater perfection therein than the Catholics." At La Rochelle, the Georges, the Denises, the Macaings, the Esprinchards, the Faneuils—until 1661, when measures of religious repression brought about a beginning of wholesale Huguenot emigration; then again for twenty years, until 1681, when renewed persecutions set in.

Huguenots barred from the royal navy; the proselyting of Huguenot children and their "conversion" to Catholicism at the age of seven permitted; the billeting of troops, frequently dragoons, in Huguenot homes ordained by the "Terrible Edict"—these persecutions, ostensibly religious, were perhaps to a far greater degree political; a final decision to eradicate Protestantism, not so much as a faith but as a possible faction, a source of foreign entanglement so often in the past detrimental to the realm.

Of them all, the enforced military domiciling was the worst. The *Dragonnades*—twice the number of

dragoons ordinarily receivable in billets, assigned to Huguenot homes everywhere in France for an unlimited time, encouraged to conduct themselves as freely as possible, at Dieppe to "create whatever disorder might be necessary"—and the dragoons of that period were not precisely respecters of person or property—and the only relief from such visitations, from such unspeakable indecencies, for instance, as were witnessed at Rouen, the adoption of the Catholic religion. And many conversions occurred, wholesale conversions, some of them genuine, more of them pretended, recanted at the first opportunity. But hundreds of families refused to give in, and thousands took flight.

The King had not counted on that, and tried in every possible repressive way to prevent it. Such a hegira as had never been known; thousands of Huguenots fleeing the country—some of the best stock in the kingdom, noble, merchant, seaman and artisan—in every sort of disguise, in every sort of conveyance, by land and by sea, with bribery and connivance, and with endless vicissitudes, perils and tragedies. From every section of France, to England and Holland, and in great numbers to America. Ravenels from Brittany, de Lancys from Normandy, Marions and Hugers from Poitou, Poinsetts and Prioleaus from Saintonge, Manigaults, Baudoins, Laurenses, Boudinots, Faneuils, Sigourneys and Jays from La Rochelle and Aunis. Names that have shone in American annals.

And what with departures and "conversions," the King could say, in 1685, that the Edict of Nantes was now "useless," and revoked it. There were no Huguenots in France any more.

23

Actually, there were still quantities of Huguenots in France, at La Rochelle and elsewhere; Huguenots who had lived patiently through the ordeal, and kept faith with their religion, emerging into a period of tolerance and freedom from tribulation—influential, wealthy and socially prominent—under a government which now preferred to pretend that the Huguenots, and with them the necessity of persecution, had ceased to exist, leaving only "new Catholics" in their place. But except politically the Huguenots had not in the least ceased to exist, and all the Jays and Faneuils, Boudinots, Poinsetts and Hugers, might just as well have remained.

And since, for one thing, although they were not supposed to exist, they were excluded from certain State careers—but principally because it was inevitably in their blood to do so—it was not long before they were once more supreme on the sea, merchants and *armateurs,* and the sons captaining the ships of the fathers; especially after the close of the War of the Austrian Succession, in 1748, and until the Seven Years' War, in 1756; and again from 1763 on through the American War and into the catastrophe of the Revolution. La Rochelle and the new neighbouring Rochefort—to replace a moribund Brouage rapidly silting up, slumbering to-day within its seventeenth century walls quite a long way from the sea—the two great ports of Saintonge; trading with Spain and with Africa, with the French islands in the Indian Ocean, with the West Indies, with Louisiana and Canada; deeply concerned in colonization, so that if one were to

"trace the history of the founding of our colonies, everywhere one will see the Rochellese opening the road"—to such an extent in Canada that at the disastrous termination of the Seven Years' War, when thirty Rochellese firms were facing bankruptcy if Canada should be lost, they were telling the King that "rather an eternal war, rather take to the sea all the finances, all the resources of the kingdom, than ever to let Canada go."

Huguenot mercantile dynasties, as they have been called; exchanging their sons with foreign Protestant concerns; closely united and corporate, but never aloof, never severe, always public spirited and gregarious; men of the world, well educated, loving the arts; building their homes along that wide street of the New Gate, just inside the ramparts; on three sides of a court behind a high wall pierced by a magnificent portal; plain, silent facades, cold and austere, protecting interiors of unusual beauty, filled with "curiosities" from far away countries and the pleasant stateliness of rare porcelains and finely carved woodwork. Admyraulds, Perrys, Garaschés, Pascauds and Fleuriaus, de Richemonds, de Butlers and Rasteaus.

Maritime princes.

CHAPTER IV

THE HIGH SEAS

1

Dieppe, Fécamp, Harfleur, Honfleur, Leure, Jumièges, Granville—Monaco of the North, steep, ramparted High Town of mariners—Saint Malo, Paimpol, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Bayonne; Normans facing the Narrow Sea, Bretons and Basques with an ocean before them, the Western Ocean, and fish to be caught. The sardine, the cod, *baccalao* of the Basques, and the whale.

From time immemorial a race of men, varying races of men, bred to the sea, to the storms and the fogs, deriding the gales in their cockleshell smacks, setting out for the grounds, year in and year out, wherever the fish might be found. Fishery a flourishing industry, a widespread occupation along all the coasts—Saint Malo reeked of it, stank of it every year for centuries, with drying fish in the streets, on the roofs, on the door steps, until emplacements further afield were secured—in the thirteenth century, during which one has already seen the Bayonnese fish yard at Brest; in the twelfth century; in the eleventh, when the Corporation of the Whalemen of Caen was a power in Normandy. And how long

before that, one may only surmise, for there was fish for the Venetes, no doubt, and for their fathers before them.

A coastwise enterprise, until one day—in the fourteenth century, in the fifteenth, perhaps—the fish began to disappear from their accustomed waters; one had to go for the cod further and further away; into the North Sea, which the Dutch claimed for their own fisheries; into the Ocean, further and further away, to the West; from the Biscayan shore one had to go further and further away for the whale; into the Ocean; to the West, always to the West. The fish had discovered new feeding grounds out there in the West—always further and further—and wherever they went, there one must likewise go, for one's living, one's whole conception of existence, were bound up in the pursuit of them, no matter how far; down in Bayonne, for example, and in nearby Cap Breton—another port of the Basques—one had gone codding and whaling since the beginnings of human memory, one had specialized in the whale, one was reputed to have invented that branch of the industry. One did not propose to abandon it, no matter how far to the West the monsters might lead one, or the *baccalaos* either.

And it was to American shores that the fish were migrating; to American shores that the Bretons and Basques, and the Normans, went following them; to the banks of what is now Newfoundland, to the islands that have become Nova Scotia; to the *Terre Neufves*—Terre Neuve which remains to this day the French name for Newfoundland—the "new lands" in the West. New again, after having been long forgotten since the Northmen had gone nosing into those waters in the tenth century; but a dim remembrance of those ancient

matters, of that Vinland, for instance, still persisting, perhaps, among men of Northman blood, in Normandy, possibly, handed down through the generations. New again, in the fourteenth century, in the fifteenth century —one will probably never know for certain. But the Island of Cap Breton, in later Nova Scotia—named after the Basque port near Bayonne—and the "Land of the Baccalaos," for Newfoundland, appearing as indications for those regions on fifteenth century maps, prior to the voyage of Giovanni Caboto, in 1498. Those regions frequented annually by Bretons and Basques prior to the voyage of Giovanni Caboto.

Prior to the voyage of Christopher Columbus. The Western Ocean crossed every year without any fuss, and in its stormiest latitudes, to a familiar shore by Breton and Basque, and Norman, fishing boats, prior to the resounding "new world" discovering passage of the Castilian caravels.

Crossed every year, but for how many years prior to 1492—in what specific year of which century to place the establishment by fishermen from France of a regular transoceanic traffic between the two worlds—that, again, one will probably never know for certain. Very few records, naturally, have survived; some of them references, only, to other records that have vanished; some of them echoes, merely, of a deep rooted tradition. Most notable among them, records of the year 1514, at Paimpol, revealing the payment for sixty years past —as far back as 1454—of taxes to the Church on fish taken "as well on the coast of Brittany, *Terre Neufve,* Iceland, as elsewhere"; a document of 1567, referring to the Breton discovery of Terre Neuve "more than a hundred years before," which takes one back once

more to the 1450s; the statement, in 1659, by the Abbé Paulmier who had had access to the old Admiralty Registers of Honfleur, to the effect that in them were to be found, "before ever Columbus was known, permits to fish for cod in the *Terres Neuves* . . . logbooks and reports of pilots who had returned from there."

And no account taken of traditional folklore, carrying the French knowledge of the "secret of *Terre Neufve*" back for a whole hundred years, for one hundred and fifty years, before 1492.

That was the point, the clue to the scarcity of recorded information. The "secret of *Terre Neufve*." It was a secret. One did not go trumpeting the news concerning the localities where fish were to be found. And as for the lands themselves, a dreary region of cold and fog in any case, to men who lived from the sea, whose only enforced concern was with the banks, they were merely of incidental importance; a landfall to be made, the temporary site of necessary landings for repairs and water. A subject of wholly technical, and reticent, discussion in local fishing circles; not a nine days' wonder of geographical discovery—they were intent solely upon discovering fish; not a matter of new hemispheres, or of gold to be obtained—they got their gold at home, from the fish—or of passages to Cathay, firing imaginations from one port to another, finding its way to the Court, or into the resorts of scholars; no interest at all in such abstractions, no breaking down of Breton secretiveness, no general dissemination of any particular curiosity; certainly not in a France just emerging from the Hundred Years' War. Fishermen crossed the Ocean every year to some lands in the West, and came back with fish—and what of it.

And as for Christopher Columbus, gathering information from every source for his proposed voyage to the West, one will never know to what extent he was assisted by notions furnished to him by stray Bretons and Basques, some of them in the service of Portugal. That there was unquestionably land out there, since they had been to it frequently; gold, Japan, the Indies—they could not say about that; but a place called Cap Breton; in 1487, a Rochellese ship on the Labrador coast; in 1480, and this was more interesting, a Basque vessel blown out of her course, sighting an island—Bermuda, perhaps—her pilot reporting the event to the Genoese navigator for what it was worth.

Traditions—old Breton and Basque maritime traditions that persist, claiming their share in the rediscovery of America; insisting upon the recognition of a prior knowledge of its existence, a long standing familiarity with its northern waters.

2

There is after all nothing very surprising about this French familiarity, this Norman, and Breton, and Basque familiarity, with the Western Ocean. One has been speculating concerning their activities in American waters during the fifteenth and possibly the fourteenth centuries—but one does not know where those ships of Alexandre Aufrédi's were going from La Rochelle, when they sailed "beyond the sun" at the close of the twelfth century; one may not begin to conjecture how far to the West and in how early a century—in the eighth or the sixth, before the Northmen—Breton and Irish Monks had navigated in search of the Isles of the Blessed.

Saint Malo and Saint Brendan, and many after them, down through the ages, voyaging to the Azores and Canaries, to Iceland and beyond, to the "mythical isles" in the Ocean, to Mayda, for instance, and to the Island of Brazil—not the Brazil of another time, but a land to which the Irish had given a name of their own. Mythical, when they could no longer be found in the changing longitudes and latitudes ascribed to them on early, inaccurate maps; recognizable now as the tentative and incomplete setting forth of Bermuda, of Cape Cod, of Cap Breton; the long famed Island of Brazil itself clearly identifiable as the region of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence with its surrounding lands. And as for Mayda, to set a date already far from legendary, a map of 1367 specifically picturing vessels with Breton banners proceeding along its shore.

And another enduring tradition of ships on the high seas, to the South this time, in that same century, almost in that very year—in 1364, and for some thirty years thereafter. Normandy ships from Dieppe, sailing to Guinea in Africa, establishing trading posts and the beginnings of a regular traffic in ivory. A century before the accepted Portuguese discovery of those regions. And still another tradition of other Dieppe ships, in 1340, voyaging to India, returning with precious cargoes—in 1340, one hundred and fifty-eight years before Vasco da Gama; a tradition referred to, the tradition of Europeans, that is, on such an ancient voyage, in Arab writings of 1462; a voyage duly recorded in the seventeenth century by the historian Asseline, a reputable author who had had access to earlier chronicles.

Always a great controversy over those Dieppe voyages, and in particular the ones to Guinea. The facts

brought out that no cartography of the day took any note of them; that the Catalan map drawn for Charles V, in 1375, is not aware of them; that no mention of them was ever made except by seventeenth century chroniclers, supposedly transcribing, as was Asseline, from the archives of Dieppe which may no longer be consulted, since they were completely destroyed by fire during the English bombardment of 1694—one of them, indeed, claiming to have seen the original agreement between Dieppe and Rouen governing the African trade. A final unanimous, official verdict of their unauthenticity, subscribed to by all modern French writers.

But not at Dieppe, where to this day the tradition persists, and the belief in it flourishes, with plausible arguments. That two Dieppe ships went to Guinea, in 1364, and founded an establishment called "Little Dieppe"; that in 1366 four more Dieppe ships went to Guinea; and that from then on until the fifteenth century, Dieppe ships went there regularly. Bringing back pepper and ivory, *morphi* as they called it, inaugurating that local art of ivory carving for which in later times Dieppe was to be universally renowned. Every good citizen of Dieppe knows that.

Dieppe—"Deep Harbour" of the Romans, site of ancient Limes, fortress of the Gauls, shelter of the Northmen; emerging in the eleventh century as a port of fishermen; fortified in the twelfth century, protected by its high castle finished by Richard Cœur de Lion; its harbour celebrated among contemporaries, and the city "powerful because of its riches"—a prominence which was temporarily to wane in 1195 when Philip Augustus, overrunning Normandy, burned the city, destroyed the shipping and demolished the castle. But

new walls constructed later, and a new castle; in 1250, work begun on the loveliness of Saint Jacques church, its tower completed in the next century, and its bell installed, the Catherine which was to ring for five hundred years; Dieppe become a prosperous maritime city, fishing and trading, wholly concerned with the sea. A Dieppe ship on its seal—a ship "well accustomed to navigate: she has good mast, and anchor, and keel."

Another ship in local legend—a black ship, with black sails, appearing in the night on the annual Day of the Dead, bearing the seamen of Dieppe who have perished, their voices calling as she sinks.

And in the fourteenth century—during those 1370s when the Guinea trade is supposed to have been definitely organized—Dieppe was extremely well placed, certainly, as were all the Normandy ports, to undertake such distant commercial voyaging. For it was in the days of the sailor King, Charles V, and his "good" Admiral Jean de Vienne; the days when the Admiral of France was sweeping the Channel with the King's navy, clearing it of enemies, leaving Normandy shipping free to attend to its own private ventures in safety; and the merchantmen taking every advantage of it, busy in every direction, in a period of noted Norman mercantile activity. So they will not fail to remind you in Dieppe—and to point out to you that the admitted decline of the African trade in the early 1400s must have been due to the changed naval conditions following upon the departure of the Admiral and his death in 1396, and to the final disasters of the Hundred Years' War which shortly ensued.

And they will insist that when the Portuguese reached Guinea they found traces of "Little Dieppe,"

and the natives calling pepper *malaguette,* or *maniguette,* which could only have been derived from the old Norman word *manguette* for that commodity. And as for the lack of documents describing those voyages—aside from the fact that the original archives of Dieppe were destroyed—they will assure you that the early African trade was a monopoly, the location and source of it a secret rarely discussed, and that the merchants and captains who entered into it would have been the last to expose it, to boast of it, or to bring it to the attention of cartographers. Mark it down on a map, for everyone to find out—certainly not. Theirs was no royal, national, public enterprise, with the discovery in view of new lands to be claimed for the realm; but a private, commercial interest, best served by secrecy, only very slightly concerned—as in the case of the fisheries—with the actual geographical significance of any particular place. But if the testimony of chroniclers who saw such archives as did exist is not sufficient, then you may go, it seems, to Saint Nazaire, where in private family records there still remains the conclusive evidence of those disputed voyages. The matter was affirmed in quite recent years by a visitor to the Museum of Dieppe—in the presence of unimaginative guides who did not even secure the name of the visitor.

So, at Dieppe, they will inform you. And one wonders, just the same, to what extent Jean Ango's bitterness, and that of the Normandy *armateurs,* against Portuguese interference with this African trade, a century or so later, may have been founded upon a very definite local recollection of a genuine previous monopoly.

3

One passes into the fifteenth century to find one of those voyages sprung from that spiritual unrest during the Hundred Years' War and the madness of the King, Charles VI, which one has already noted; that necessity for movement and adventure which had sent the chivalry of France with Jean de Vienne to Nicopolis in 1396, which was now, in the early 1400s, sending men forth on romantic maritime quests. Anywhere, for any purpose, so long as it was far away, and glamorous; an escape from the black realities of a discordant, disintegrating France; one of the few occasions in their history when Frenchmen have been deliberately willing to expatriate themselves—the time of the Huguenots was another—to set aside that love of the native soil, that contentment with its resources and amenities, that sense of the hearth, which have always been so vital a national characteristic.

And in 1402, Jean de Béthencourt and Gadifer de La Salle, with a company of colonists, were sailing from La Rochelle, in a Harfleur ship, out into the Western Ocean. To the Canary Islands, which the Genoese had rediscovered in the previous century, and done nothing about. To found a kingdom, the "Kingdom of Béthencourt," to establish a crown for the "King of the Canaries," to people the islands with good folks from Harfleur. Good folks who quarrelled, and mutinied, and deserted, in a fearful commotion of mishaps and alarms until 1404; while Jean de Béthencourt was in Spain, confirming his titles, and Gadifer de La Salle governed the kingdom, exploring and settling. And then it was Gadifer de La Salle who went home, to

procure other colonists who arrived from Harfleur in 1405, while the "King" managed the islands, prospecting about, once reaching the African coast. But now in Normandy the Hundred Years' War was at its worst, Harfleur was conquered, Agincourt fought; no more colonists were coming, and no funds or supplies; and in 1418 Jean de Béthencourt sold his kingdom to Castile.

A short lived experiment in colonization which may have been the means through which another curious voyage, unearthed by Mr. de La Roncière, was accomplished. The voyage of Anselme d'Isalguier to the Niger country in Africa. For in 1405 Jean de Béthencourt touched the African coast, and in 1405 this Anselme d'Isalguier appeared in Nigeria, having departed from his native Toulouse in 1402, the year of the original Béthencourt voyage to the Canaries—the assumption being that Anselme d'Isalguier was a member of that expedition, landed in Africa by Jean de Béthencourt. And in Nigeria—in that remarkable black empire, managed commercially and financially by Jews, which the gold seeking firm of Centurione was to deal with at the close of the Hundred Years' War—Anselme d'Isalguier lived for several years, taking unto himself a native wife, returning with her eventually to Toulouse, to the wonder of all beholders.

4

A hundred years later, and a great seafaring activity at Honfleur—Honnefleu of early days; distinguished already before the Hundred Years' War; bold haven of corsairs in the fifteenth century; centre of fishermen, long distance captains and merchants in the

sixteenth; in the seventeenth, strongly Huguenot; nursery of seamen and mariners lodged for long generations along that ancient street that is still to be seen, the *Rue Haute*. Founders and members, fathers and sons, whole families at a time—four hundred members in 1457, the year of the founding, and many bishops, and nobles, and persons of high estate along with the sailors—of that benevolent association to which Jehan Ango paid dues, the "Brothers and Sisters of the Charity and Brotherhood founded in the church of Our Lady of Honnefleu, to the honour of God, of the blessed Virgin Mary, of Mylord Saint Michael, of Mylord Saint Leonard, of Mylord Saint Nicholas, of Mylord Saint Cosmo and of Mylord Saint Damien."

A great seafaring activity; to Terre Neuve, and to Brazil—not the mythical "island" this time, but the northern coast of Brazil in South America; another sore subject, in 1531, between Jean Ango and the excluding Portuguese, who claimed discovery of that region by Cabral, in 1500. For if there was one thing that Norman and Breton ships had been doing, before Cabral was ever seen in those waters, it was voyaging for "brazil" wood to Brazil, whole sections of which they had admittedly discovered and exploited—but as usual without making any fuss about it.

Indeed, there was an assertion put forward at Dieppe, again, of a voyage made in 1488 to Brazil by a certain Jean Cousin, who in his account described his discovery of the mouth of the Amazon, and his subsequent journey home by way of the Cape of Good Hope —a contemporary, then, of Bartolomeo Diaz—a startling journey, to be sure, were it not discredited by Jean Cousin's participation in another slightly later voyage

to Brazil, certain features of which he appears to have copied a little too closely in his own alleged journal.

The voyage of the so called Paulmier de Gonneville, a member of the Charity, of course, actually Binot Le Paulmier, of the parish of Gonneville—or Robinet Le Paulmier, Binot being simply a diminutive of his first name—in 1503, in the *Espoir* of Honfleur. A voyage during the months of June, 1503, to January, 1504, of which one hundred and ninety days were spent at sea. Then a second voyage during the months of July to October, 1504, of which one hundred days were spent at sea. And a mystery there, because one of the voyages was to Brazil and back—bringing an Indian who settled in Normandy and established a family there—so much is certain; but which of the voyages to Brazil, and the destination of the other, that is not known.

Many voyages from Honfleur to Brazil right along during the sixteenth century—and an "alliance" between Honfleur and Rouen in 1525 for that traffic—including a voyage by Jean Denys, in 1504; but his name is more closely associated with Terre Neuve and the fisheries. For the "Big Fishing" was flourishing out there in that century; the Girauds and Méhées, the Gargoulleaus, Réaus and Manigaults of La Rochelle; whole townsful from Granville, Paimpol and Saint Malo; the Rufosses of Honfleur; Jehan Ango of Dieppe, sending his *Pensée* out in 1508 under Thomas Aubert of Honfleur, to make an attempt at a settlement; by the end of the century, the French in definite control of the banks, raiders from Spain and Portugal driven away, the English obtaining permission from the Malouins before they presume to encroach.

But a special importance attaching to Jean Denys.

A personage at Honfleur; his whole family in the Charity; bringing ships up from the Mediterranean in 1492, along with Jean le Danois, one of the most prosperous *armateurs* of the port; spoken of by the Italian chronicler who recorded his voyages as the "great French Captain." Sailing in 1506 to Terre Neuve, and on into the Saint Lawrence.

Twenty-eight years before Jacques Cartier's discovery.

5

Francis I of France was interested in the sea; one has seen how he built ships and a port; how he sponsored Giovanni Verrazano, and through him established a claim to Nova Gallia on the North American continent; how he had his moments of energy on behalf of Jean Ango and the freedom of the seas, in opposition to Spain and Portugal. And like all monarchs of his time, he was extremely interested in gold.

And now there was a rumour that out there somewhere among those *Terres Neufves* there was gold to be had. Nicolas Don, in a Breton ship, returning from Terre Neuve in 1526, cruising or storm driven in one direction or another, had come, it was said, upon shores where he had found quantities of gold. And where Nicholas Don with a cargo of fish, or even with news of new territories, would not have stirred up any very great commotion, Nicholas Don with gold in his hold was a ship of another colour. In any case, the royal Treasury, in 1534, was willing to finance a voyage with two vessels beyond the "strait of the bay of the Castles" —the Strait of Belle Isle—to "certain isles and countries where it is said that there should be found great quantity

of gold." And for pilot of the expedition, a man of the sea, who may or may not have been with Giovanni Verrazano, Jacques Cartier of Saint Malo; a substantial person, then in his forties.

And the Spaniards who owned one half of the globe, and the Portuguese who owned the other, were violently concerned, and set all their spies in motion to propagate every conceivable sort of detrimental rumour; so that seafaring men hid themselves rather than go on this fatal expedition, and Malouin ships had to be detained to prevent mariners from removing themselves to less parlous localities. But when it seemed that the Cartier adventure was bound to the North, the Portuguese were not so excited, and the Spaniards still less so. And on April 20 they sailed, with a prayer to Our Lady of Great Might who brought them safely to Terre Neuve in twenty days.

And from Terre Neuve they passed through the "strait of the bay of the Castles," following the cheerless Labrador shore, the land of Cain, to the West—finding a large Rochellese vessel at home in one of its bays—then South along the West coast of Terre Neuve; and one thing established, which had not been certain before, that Terre Neuve was an island. Then West again, passing Saint John Island, which is now Prince Edward, and North along the present New Brunswick shore. It was fine, warm summer weather, "hotter than Spain," they thought, and the "most beautiful country" imaginable.

And in July they saw before them the wide entrance to what could only be a North West passage to the Indies, approached around a cape which they named the Cape of Hope—Cap d'Espoir, the French sound of which was one day antonymously to be con-

verted into the English Cape Despair. The Cape of Hope because it should mark the way to Cathay—but the wide entrance was only a bay after all, the Baie de Chaleur, of the heat, as they called it. And a little further, on Gaspé, for the first time on that mainland, they put up the Cross, and the arms of France, and *Vive le Roy de France* above them. Then North again to a large island—Anticosti—but the good season was passing, the storms were at hand, and it was time to sail home. Too late already to escape one terrible tempest, but in the first days of September they were sighting Saint Malo.

And still no suspicions of the Saint Lawrence as a river; but some native talk about a country called Canada, and a great city, Hochelaga, which must surely be in Cathay, in the realms of the Grand Khan of Tartary.

Cathay—that was splendid, and eight months later the royal munificence was again organizing a voyage; in three ships, the "Big Ermine" and the "Little Ermine," and the *Emerillon;* a wholly Catholic voyage, for Jacques Cartier had no patience with Huguenot "heretics," those "imitators of Mahomet" and "sons of the devil." So they sailed, on May 16, 1535, after mass in that church crowning the Rock, where the spot is still marked in the choir—and where the sailors still come before the annual departure for Terre Neuve—while "Big Malo" clanged overhead. Tramping down that steep, winding street to the waterfront which resounds every year now with the processional music of the benediction of Saint Malo's fishing fleet; bugles and drums, and the Crucifix; the crimson of vestments and a mitred bishop in gold, carrying his crozier; banners and

old models of ships, and the sailors, descendants of the fellows who went with Jacques Cartier, who seems always to be there as they pass.

A very rough voyage that only brought them to Terre Neuve in July, but there was no hurry, for this time they were planning to winter in New France—a term of the meaning of which in those latitudes they had no conception. They returned to Gaspé and explored Anticosti; then West along Labrador—and a dreadful discovery; for it seemed, from what the natives said, that this great westerly passage into which they were at last venturing was in reality a river narrowing down to fresh water. But still it must be a river come from Cathay; one must cling to that belief, and reach Hochelaga.

They came to the Saguenay; and in time to the city of Stadacona, which was one day to be Quebec—city forsooth, a collection of huts, and no sign of the Grand Khan of Tartary. But Hochelaga was beyond, far away up the river, surely in Cathay. Jacques Cartier left his two "Ermines" behind to build a fort, and went on in the little *Emerillon;* but after ten days they had to take to the boats; finally, they were on a beach not far from Hochelaga, and the savages feasting the white men; then overland, all of them, to the walled city of Hochelaga, where the Grand Khan must be waiting.

But the Grand Khan was not waiting at Hochelaga; the great walled city of Jacques Cartier's willing imagination was just a village behind palisades. It was a moment of very great bitterness. But there was a mountain which he climbed, and named Mont Real, or "Mount Royal." In this manner Jacques Cartier reached the site of the present Montreal, following that

river which he had been the first European to ascend. And from the top of the mountain you could see far to the West, all that continuing country, and *there* must be Cathay. The natives seemed to agree; men in armour —yes, in the West; gold and silver—yes, in the West. So Jacques Cartier understood them to say.

He returned to Stadacona, and soon the winter set in; the terrific winter which they had never dreamed of. A desperate period of incredible cold, and scurvy, and trouble with the Indians. At one time, with twenty-five dead already, there were only three white men up on their feet. But it passed; the sick were restored by a decoction of spruce wood or pine; the spring was at hand. A Cross was put up, claiming the region for Francis I; some natives were seized, persuaded to make the journey to France, assured that they would be brought back—but at Saint Malo, after seeing the King, they were to sicken and die—the "Little Ermine" was abandoned; and on May 6, 1536, they sailed, arriving at Saint Malo in two months from that date.

And for the King, no Cathay as yet—no Canada, for that matter, no particular response to the implications of that broad land of woods and streams for its own sake, aside from the furs—but the promise of "infinite" gold, the attraction of rubies, the legend of very great riches to be found in the West, beyond Hochelaga, in a country which Jacques Cartier called Saguenay. So, he was convinced, the natives had told him.

6

Rubies and infinite gold—that also was splendid, enormously exciting, and in 1540 a Spanish agent was reporting the preparation, at Saint Malo, of a tremen-

dous expedition of thirteen ships, with twenty-five hundred colonists; and Jacques Cartier, again, as Master Pilot and Captain General, to be supplied by the King with "a good share of ships and men of all kinds."

But there were other fingers in the pie, this time—those rubies were attracting attention—and the King had also appointed a Lieutenant General of New France over Jacques Cartier's head; Jean François de La Roque, Lord of Roberval, who believed in Cathay in Canada, and who was an aggressive, hot tempered, hard fisted personage. And because there was trouble in getting men to go out—the Canadian winter was attracting attention, as well as the rubies, and the Malouin fishermen were concerned over the possible establishment of a royal monopoly on fishing in American waters—the Lieutenant General and the Master Pilot were empowered to empty the jails for their colonists; chain gangs of "convicts," women and men—one went to jail for very little sometimes in those days—gathering at Saint Malo from various parts of the country. And in May, 1541, the Lord of Roberval was not ready; he lacked guns for his ships, and some of these were still at Harfleur; he had certain privateering engagements in mind; and on May 23 Jacques Cartier sailed ahead, with five vessels and supplies for two years.

It was a long, hard grind against head winds, with the water failing, so that the animals had to be given cider to drink; then a long delay at Terre Neuve, waiting for the Lord of Roberval who did not come; and it was the end of August before they reached Stadacona. They pushed on a few miles, to Cap Rouge at the mouth of a stream, and built the two forts of Charlebourg Royal, sending two of the ships home with the news.

And there among the rocks they found diamonds, and in the sands little particles of gold. Just as the natives had said. Gold, and diamonds in place of rubies, and dreams coming true.

But the winter was doleful; the Indians were not friendly; the "country" of Saguenay remained inaccessible; the Lord of Roberval did not come. In the spring of 1542 they sailed away, and in June, at Terre Neuve, there was the Lord of Roberval, at last, with two hundred colonists in "three tall ships"—he had sailed in April from Honfleur—and with him, as pilot, the notorious Jean Fonteneau, better known as Alfonse de Saintonge, a navigator of wide experience in Portuguese service, to Africa, to the Indies, to America—only there were those who doubted his actual presence at any time in a majority of the places which he described in his works—who was to die, soon, on his own quarterdeck, fighting the Spaniards in La Rochelle roadstead. And they tested Jacques Cartier's gold, and it seemed to be genuine; and the Lieutenant General ordered everybody back to the river; but Jacques Cartier would not obey, and his people sailed furtively off in the night, "stole privily away . . . and without taking their leaves departed home"—leaving the Lord of Roberval to continue on alone to Charlebourg Royal, and to a winter of terrible hardships, discord and disease.

All this Canadian talk of rubies and gold, these long voyages of Jacques Cartier to the new lands of Saguenay, and perhaps to Cathay, had made a great stir—royal adventures achieving publicity, whereas similar private enterprises went unperceived—people were talking and writing about them; in his *Quart Livre,* Rabelais was simply relating a voyage through the North

West passage, plainly intending Jacques Cartier and Alfonse de Saintonge in his Jamet Brayer and Xenomanes; and here, in 1542, Jacques Cartier was home, with diamonds and gold.

Home, to give glittering proof of the existence of those treasures which he had so loudly proclaimed—actually, to give only a proverb to contemporary speech. "False as a diamond from Canada." For the diamonds were crystal, the gold merely mica, or copper, or if it was gold then in negligible quantity. The dreams were a myth, Jacques Cartier a laughing stock, the Canadian bubble had burst. There remained to bring the Lord of Roberval home, and it seems certain from various fiscal records that it was Jacques Cartier who, in 1543, was sent out for the last time to get the Lieutenant General of New France. And in 1557, at his manor of Limoilou, the Master Pilot for Canada died.

And for the next fifty odd years Canada was forgotten, except as a region in which Malouin fishermen and others extended their activity to include a lucrative fur trade—*there* were the diamonds and rubies—going in summer to Tadoussac, at the mouth of the Saguenay; but no further, for Stadacona and Charlebourg Royal were delusions of the past. But a seed had been planted with Jacques Cartier's Crosses; a name had gone into the folklore of France as well as a proverb; Canada was calling; and in due time men were to return, from Honfleur, and Saint Malo, and La Rochelle, to Jacques Cartier's river.

7

Brazil again, while Canada was forgotten.

At his accession, in 1547, Henry II of France had

once more prohibited that trade in the forbidden Portuguese regions, the maintenance of which, as has been seen, had so greatly exercised Jean Ango and his colleagues. But in 1550, the King was charmed out of his diplomatic attitude, and his imagination aroused, not by commercial or political arguments, but as the result of a magnificent spectacle offered, perhaps not entirely without ulterior guile, by the merchants of Rouen for his delectation. An incredible Brazilian pageant, depicting native villages, ceremonials and dances, which utterly delighted the King, and sent him back to Paris all consumed with enthusiasm for renewed Brazilian enterprises. So much so that he forthwith summoned Guillaume Le Testu, a cartographer of note, and dispatched him from Dieppe, in 1551, to survey the coast of Brazil; a mission which he successfully accomplished, in spite of Portuguese perils.

And in 1555 the King was granting ships and money, ordering a colonizing expedition to Brazil—not at all the specifically Huguenot undertaking, supposedly inaugurated by Admiral de Coligny for the alleged purpose of providing in South America a Protestant refuge from persecution, which some chroniclers, anticipating events, have endeavoured to read into it. A royal enterprise, and Catholic and Protestant colonists alike included—some six hundred men of varying degree and calling, but no "convicts" among them—going out to found "Antarctic France"; and as commander, a very remarkable man, Nicolas Durand, who called himself Villegagnon.

Linguist, theologian—he had been a fellow student with Calvin—soldier and sailor; a veteran of wars with the Turks; a survivor from the great Spanish disaster

at Algiers, in 1541; Commander of Malta, Vice Admiral of France, foremost among the seafaring men of his age; especially noted for his exploit in 1548, when, in order to fetch the child, Mary, Queen of Scots, who was to be brought to France for her education—a move which the English were anxious to prevent—he took his galleys around the North of Scotland on a journey hitherto unattempted by such vessels, and gave the English the slip.

Now in command of the King's expedition to Antarctic France, to which he had already made one voyage in 1544; keenly interested, himself, in the promotion of colonization in Brazil; deeply concerned, also, in theological matters, strongly inclined, for a time, towards the new Protestant doctrines, although always remaining a Catholic; attracted for a while, perhaps, by the notion of developing a religious community free from all sectarian repression, whether Catholic or Protestant; frowned upon for his pains, in his day, by the Catholics; by the Protestants, then and ever since, disparaged, libelled and misrepresented. So it would seem to-day, through the mazes of an unsettled controversy, the mists of prejudiced, if not deliberately distorted, testimony put forth by Calvinist ministers of his time—controversies and testimonies which it is not the province of these pages to revive, except in so far as they more directly affect the destinies of his venture.

They sailed in July, 1555, from Havre, only to be driven by tempests into Dieppe, where a majority of the colonists promptly deserted—and no very great Huguenot anxiety evident for that South American security from persecution which has been claimed as one of the moving purposes of the venture. The remainder battled

it out, on a very long voyage of oppressive heat, aggravated by sickness caused by the foul water; and in November they were at Rio de Janeiro, landing on an island to build Fort Coligny—in honour of the Admiral of France, patron, in his official capacity and not yet in any religious sense, of the colony—kindly received by the natives for whom the arrival of any Europeans other than Portuguese was a comparative blessing. And after various vicissitudes, and an attempt, already, on the part of some of his turbulent colonists to assassinate him, Nicolas Villegagnon sent word back to France through his nephew—the Lord of Bois-le-Comte-les-Meaux, Captain General of the Fleet in Antarctic France—to ask for reinforcements, several thousand men at least with which to assure the settlement and proceed to a conquest of the Indies.

But now, in 1556, there were changes in France; the position of the Huguenots had become more acute; the religious wars were soon to begin; Admiral de Coligny had at last thrown in his lot with the Protestants, and, foreseeing the troubles in store, was actively intent on removing them from France, on providing a place of safety for them—the idea was to recur—in Antarctic France, for instance. Intent on those aims which have usually been too previously assigned to the first expedition. And while Nicolas Villegagnon was asking for soldiers, the Admiral thought it an excellent opportunity to send him out detachments of Huguenots, with some boys and young girls, and Protestant ministers. A messenger was even sent to Geneva—it was to be a Protestant contention, always denied by Nicolas Villegagnon, that the commander of Antarctic France was himself the sender—to secure Calvin's ap-

proval, and volunteers for the journey, such as ministers Pierre Richer and Guillaume Chartier. And as leader for this definitely sectarian, and under the circumstances somewhat inadequate company, the venerable *Sieur* du Pont, an old friend of the Admiral.

Preparations had been made at Honfleur for this new expedition, in three ships which the Admiral had procured from the King, with the assistance, it seems, of the great Elie Chaudet; a long distance captain of renown; one of the wealthiest *armateurs* and fur traders of the port, accumulating a fortune of one hundred thousand *livres* from "the riches which he had brought back from Canada"—more diamonds and rubies of a more substantial sort—at one time Governor of Honfleur, and known as "King Chaudet"; a staunch Huguenot who, at the outbreak of the wars, seized the town, and when it rebelled besieged it and took it again, after burning a part of it. Secret preparations, in 1556, so as not to attract public attention to this Huguenot departure—which did not prevent the citizenry of Honfleur from breaking into the house where the Genevans were sheltered, with riot and violence—and in November they were gone, to arrive in March, 1557; under the command of the Lord of Bois-le-Comte who, imprudently enough, saw fit on his way to commit piracy upon several Spanish and Portuguese ships.

But at Fort Coligny things were not going so well. The colonists had been very obstreperous, Nicolas Villegagnon very severe. And with the arrival of the Geneva ministers, after a period of welcoming amenity, the animosities of religious discussion began to poison the air; the Catholics and the Protestants, and the Protestants among themselves; embittered by the righteous ar-

rogance of the pastors, for there was sometimes a quality to Huguenot fervour calculated to infuriate the angels. In any case, the place full of Huguenots, booming their psalms through the woods—the time was not quite come yet for their famous chorus of "Hau, Hau, Papegots, clear the way for the Huguenots"—and Nicolas Villegagnon at first very eager, very partial to the Calvinist doctrine—writing to Calvin in terms of the greatest respect, while the ministers chanted his praises in the same quarter—then allowing himself to become involved in their ritualistic disputes, taking a hand in the interpretation of orthodoxy, questioning minister Richer—who never forgave him—becoming suddenly more and more irascible and intolerant, turning against Geneva, denouncing Calvin as a heretic, hounding the Protestants out of his sight.

So they were to report afterwards, and minister Richer in particular; and that Nicolas Villegagnon was crazy, dressing himself in bright colours, having spasms of rage; that he persecuted the Protestant colonists and put some of them to death; and that he drove some away from the island onto the mainland, exposed to attacks from the savages, so that a handful were finally obliged to set sail in a worm eaten vessel, to reach Brittany five months later after unspeakable sufferings. But from Catholic sources one learns that the *Sieur* du Pont, and minister Richer, and others insisted on leaving the island, threatening violence if they were detained, and that their departure in the *Jacques* was of their own free determining and desire. And as for Nicolas Villegagnon's aberrations, he was to show himself anything but demented in his subsequent service as a Catholic captain during the wars; and as for his severities and sud-

den hostility towards the Protestants, they were certainly influenced by letters from France upbraiding him for his earlier Huguenot tendencies.

And after the *Sieur* du Pont and minister Richer had gone—minister Chartier had already returned to Europe—the colony continued to exist; but with all the Huguenot talk, and with Calvin pronouncing anathemas, new colonists were difficult to obtain, so that in 1558 the Lord of Bois-le-Comte had to sail from Rouen with the sweepings of jails; and in 1559, in view of the disturbed conditions in France, Nicolas Villegagnon went home. And for all his reputation in Huguenot circles, he was arranging to sail again with colonists in two ships, when the news arrived, in 1561, of the destruction of Fort Coligny by the Portuguese. Right away he wanted to lead a naval expedition of reprisals, and Admiral de Coligny was preparing a fleet for an eight months' campaign when the eruption of the religious wars put an end to the business, leaving the Admiral and Nicolas Villegagnon as enemies.

And out there in Brazil—with difficulty supplied now by occasional vessels—a few isolated posts, escaped from Fort Coligny and befriended by the natives, held out with a hopeless fortitude until 1567. And Brazil was almost forgotten, in the chaos at home, until in 1605 a new settlement was formed, on the Amazon this time —formed, and likewise destroyed, in 1616, by a Portuguese fleet; but from those beginnings was eventually to grow the French colony of Guyana.

8

And in the meantime, in 1562, the Admiral was still interested in transoceanic colonization, more than ever

intent upon establishing a Huguenot place of refuge in the Americas; preparing to use some of the ships originally destined for reprisals against the Portuguese, with the purpose of sending them, for a change, to Florida, legendary land of fabulous riches—for the dark clouds of voluntary Huguenot exile had their own silver linings. And a challenge to Spanish exclusion, which claimed that region for its own, as a sentinel for Mexico.

Some soldiers and colonists in two ships, with Huguenot Jean Ribault, of Dieppe, to command them; a "man in truth expert in sea causes"; the "most skillful sailor and corsair that was known," in contemporary Spanish opinion—high praise from the great Pedro Menendez himself, terror and scourge of the seas. Jean Ribault, foremost among the mariners of that strongly Huguenot port to which Jean Ango's captains had bequeathed the reputation of possessing some of the best seamen in France, along with its school of hydrography and its renowned manufacture of nautical instruments. And with Jean Ribault, among other young nobles, the excellent Réné de Laudonnière, navigator and gentleman.

They sailed in February, 1562, from Havre, and the end of the journey found them off what is now Matanzas Inlet, coasting North; naming waterways after the rivers of France; putting up a stone column near the mouth of the present Saint Johns; looking for "the River Jordan, one of the finest rivers of the North"; finding one they called Port Royal, and building Charlesfort there. Settling down while Jean Ribault, with the ships and the sailors, returned to France for more colonists—settling down to a headlong search

for gold, neglecting their food supplies; then to a winter of want and distress, culminating in mutiny and murder. And no news from Jean Ribault, and the survivors deciding, in the spring of 1563, to build themselves a pinnace and set out for France.

And although "there was no man among them that had any skill, notwithstanding necessity, which is the mistress of all sciences, taught them the way to build it." And if they lacked "those things that of all others were most useful, as cordage and sails," they procured hemp from the natives, and sewed up their shirts and their sheets; they "brayed" the boat with rosin, and caulked it with moss; and they sailed—but only very slenderly provisioned, "being drunken with the excessive joy which they had conceived for their returning into France."

And then it began, and perhaps one should not record it. But Réné de Laudonnière wrote it, and one needs such a glimpse of the sufferings to which men venturing at sea could be exposed. They were becalmed. In three weeks they did not progress more than twenty-five leagues. Each man was down to twelve grains of mill a day, and "yea, and this felicity did not last long." There was no food any more, and "they had nothing for their more assured refuge but their shoes and leather jerkins which they did eat." There was no fresh water, and some swallowed sea water, and some the only other thing that there was. They were dying of hunger and thirst, the pinnace was leaking, a storm blew them out of their course, "bruising" the boat and very nearly swamping them, and "they fell"—those who were still alive—"every minute of an hour out of all hope ever to see France again." Three days of this, and "certain

among them made this motion that it was better that one man should die than that so many men should perish: they agreed therefore that one should die to sustain the others . . . whose flesh was divided equally among his fellows: a thing so pitiful to recite that my pen is loth to write it."

And when an English barque spied them they were too exhausted to care, letting the pinnace "float this and that way." A companion voyage to that amazing crossing of seven American Indians found, in 1510, by a French ship off the coast of England, in a reed canoe covered with bark, and six of them dying.

9

Jean Ribault, arriving in France in 1562 with his report of the establishment of Charlesfort at Port Royal, had found the first of the religious wars under way, and himself in the field with Admiral de Coligny. There was no time for Port Royal—and at the "pacification" of 1563, disgusted with conditions in France, Jean Ribault crossed over to Protestant England, there to publish an account of his Florida voyage which came under the eye of Elizabeth. Whereupon the Queen persuaded him, with gifts, to go with five ships for the purpose of handing over Charlesfort to the adventurer, Thomas Stukeley. But at the last moment Jean Ribault found it impossible to do—France was France, after all—and tried his best to escape; but they took him at Gravesend and put him in chains, threatened with death if he did not accompany Thomas Stukeley—saved from the voyage, however, by the landing of that pinnaceful of survivors from Charlesfort.

But the Admiral had not finished with Florida—

indeed, preparations for an expedition had been afoot prior to the receipt of the survivors' news. Three ships, sailing with colonists from Havre in April, 1564, commanded by Réné de Laudonnière; casting anchor in the river where Jean Ribault had put up the stone column; the colonists building Fort Caroline on the shore; watching the ships set sail again for France; singing their psalms.

Another chronicle of gold hunting, and disputes, and mutinies—Réné de Laudonnière imprisoned in his fort, while some of the mutineers stole his boats and went careering around Cuba and Jamaica, committing scandalous piracies, drawing the infuriated attention of the Spaniards to their antics; in the summer of 1565, the colonists at the end of their resources, hearing nothing from France; preparing to construct a vessel when suddenly, on August 3, four ships appeared, and there, for three days, was the Englishman, John Hawkins, with a Dieppe pilot aboard, returning from one of his illicit slave trading adventures in the Spanish possessions; furnishing shoes and food; taking the French commander's note for a fifty ton barque; offering to repatriate the Huguenots—but Réné de Laudonnière was too canny for that—and "I may say that we received as many courtesies of the General as it was possible to receive of any man living, wherein doubtless he hath won the reputation of a good charitable man."

And on August 28—summoned from England by the Admiral, sent out from Dieppe in May—Jean Ribault came sailing in with seven ships and three hundred colonists. And orders recalling Réné de Laudonnière to France, to answer charges against him; charges which he disproved at once, at Fort Caroline, but which

moved him so profoundly that he was obliged to take to his bed, broken and ill. But neither he nor Jean Ribault suspected the worst news of all.

For right on Jean Ribault's stern—hoping, in fact, to get there ahead of him, provided with French pilots to point out the way—Pedro Menendez was coming.

10

Pedro Menendez de Aviles, the terror and scourge of the seas; hating the Protestants with a cold, automatic hatred, deepened and animated with a glacial cruelty in recent years by the sacrileges and bloody piracies of Huguenot corsairs in the West Indies; determined to exterminate them; to conquer Florida for God and for Spain; and to do so at his own expense, with all the resources of his vast fortune accumulated in the Americas.

He had sailed from Cadiz, in June, with fifteen hundred men in twenty ships—and more coming—himself in the thousand ton *San Pelayo,* with seven hundred soldiers. And on September 4, one week precisely after Jean Ribault's arrival, the *San Pelayo* came looming up alone at dusk from the South, and anchored in the midst of a group of French vessels. They spoke each other with trumpets, and the *San Pelayo* enquired if these were Catholics or Lutherans, and was told they were Lutherans. Then, Pedro Menendez announced, he would board them at daybreak, and "every heretic should die." To which the French replied that he might "come on now," and be damned to him—but they knew themselves to be no match for him, and slipped away in the night; too fast to be pursued, so that the *San Pelayo*

returned southward, stopping to establish the settlement of Saint Augustine.

And now that the Spaniards were there, Jean Ribault must go after them with the bulk of his fleet, in spite of Réné de Laudonnière's advice that he stand by Fort Caroline, in spite of every indication of foul weather. Smash the Spaniards, if possible; but instead, on September 10, it was a hurricane that smashed Jean Ribault—"the worst weather that ever was seen on the coast," in the opinion of the Indians—wrecking all of his ships, casting him with some six hundred men ashore to trudge themselves North again along the beaches.

And Pedro Menendez let them go. He was on his way to Fort Caroline, fifty dreadful miles in ten days through the swamps and everglades, guided by one of Réné de Laudonnière's mutineers. Five hundred Spaniards bursting in the middle of the night upon the Fort where the commander lay ill in bed, with perhaps eighty men guarding the women and children. It did not take long. Réné de Laudonnière and a few others escaped, standing for hours up to their necks in the swamps, reaching a small vessel which got them to England. For the rest, aboard of the other vessels in the river, Pedro Menendez was nailing the captains to the masts by their eyes; on the shore, with other unrecordable horrors, the Huguenot corpses were burning; some of them hanging to trees under an inscription—"I do this not as unto Frenchmen, but as unto Lutherans." And then the great Pedro Menendez turned South, to look for Jean Ribault's party.

Near Matanzas Inlet he came upon some two hundred of them whom he slaughtered, for, as he notified the King of Spain, "it seemed to me that to chastise them

thus would serve God our Lord as well as Your Majesty." And a little later Jean Ribault turned up with his four hundred companions. They dickered back and forth, and in the end a hundred of them with Jean Ribault decided to risk it, placing themselves in the hands of Pedro Menendez; the others preferring to try their luck in the jungle, where in groups they were run down and taken for the galleys, only a few of them finding safety with the Indians, disappearing into the interior. And as for Jean Ribault and his people—were they Lutherans, Pedro Menendez wished to know. They were. And "I caused Ribault and all the others to be put to the knife."

And the great Pedro Menendez went back to Saint Augustine, leaving the Huguenot corpses smouldering in heaps on the sands; but carrying with him the skin of Jean Ribault's face and his beard, to be sent to Seville.

Amen.

11

In France they made a great roar of official protests about it, writing back and forth diplomatically; but it was not the royal policy at the time to antagonize Spain; little by little the matter was dropped; when Réné de Laudonnière presented himself at Court he was very coolly received. It remained for a Catholic, a private gentleman of Guyenne, to remember those Florida corpses.

Dominique de Gourgues, an excellent person, had been "employed for the service of the Most Christian King in all the armies made since these . . . thirty years"—which was a great many armies. He had been

captured by the Spaniards and put in their galleys, "in token of the good war and singular favour which the Spaniard is wont to show us"; his galley had been itself captured by the Turks, retaken by the Maltese, setting him free; he had been to Africa, to Brazil, to the Pacific; he was a "valiant captain" and a "skillful mariner." And he did not love the Spaniards.

Now, in 1566, he was selling his property, borrowing funds, organizing what seemed to be a slave trade enterprise; assembling one hundred and fifty adventurers and eighty "chosen mariners," and three small vessels. They sailed, in August, 1567; to Benin for slaves; carrying them illicitly to the Spanish West Indies, as John Hawkins had been doing; and in Cuba he told his people the truth. Florida. In April, 1568, they were skirting that shore, receiving a salute from a Spanish fort which mistook them for Spaniards, returning it in order to "entertain them in this error." A little later Dominique de Gourgues was landing, just beyond the site of Fort Caroline; consulting with the natives—who also did not love the Spaniards—proving to them that his shiploads were really French by the ability of some of his Huguenot sailors to finish the verses of songs which the Indians had learned—the psalms of Marot with which the Huguenot colonists had filled the woods a few years before.

There were three Spanish forts now in place of Fort Caroline, but no matter. With his men and reinforcements of Indians, Dominique de Gourgues marched overland, swooping down on the forts, capturing and destroying them, massacring four hundred Spaniards. And some of the old Huguenot skeletons were still hanging from the trees, under Pedro Menen-

dez's inscription; so Dominique de Gourgues hanged fifteen of his Spanish corpses to the same branches, under an inscription of his own—"I do this not as unto Spaniards, not as unto mariners, but as unto traitors, robbers and murderers." So Jean Ribault was avenged; and Dominique de Gourgues sailed away before the Spaniards at Saint Augustine could get at him.

In France he had "made many Frenchmen right glad," and he was joyously received at La Rochelle, in June; but when he continued on to Bordeaux, the Spaniards were already on his trail, with a price on his head; and when he went to Paris, offering to "employ his life and all his goods" for the conquest of Florida, the King would not receive him; for reasons of State he was disavowed, and for a while he was even obliged to make himself scarce in order to avoid a threat of actual punishment; all of which "grieved not a little Dominique de Gourgues." He had put his fortune into the affair, and it was with difficulty, now, that he managed to pay his debts, his only profits being derived from the Spanish artillery that he had captured. But his loyalty, his equanimity were not shaken. And having avenged the Huguenots, he then fought against them like the good Catholic captain that he was—what he had done for the memory of the Huguenot colonists in Florida had been done, one might say, not as unto Lutherans but as unto Frenchmen—serving in the royal navy, taking part in the siege of La Rochelle of 1572.

But taking part, first, in that mysterious venture which the Rochellese were convinced, after Saint Bartholomew's Eve, was to be directed against themselves, but which, in the early part of the year, was attracting volunteers from all over the country for an expedition

organized by Philippe Strozzi—Admiral of the galleys and cousin of Catherine de Médicis—an expedition the destination of which was a secret, the subject of varying rumours. Ireland, Peru, Algiers, Panama; one would only know positively when the sealed orders were opened, but there was certainly a suspicion of Florida, with Réné de Laudonnière arming a ship with the assistance of a Rouennese syndicate; with Dominique de Gourgues again staking his possessions, borrowing money along with numbers of other adventurers, many of them Huguenots. A possibility, too, that the expedition was conceived as another attempt ultimately to provide a habitation in America for the Huguenots, to which they might be removed—Philippe Strozzi was to make such a definite offer of Florida to the Rochellese just prior to the siege—although for the time being Admiral de Coligny himself was endeavouring to divert the armament to the Spanish Low Countries, where the uprisen Protestant "Tramps of the Sea" and "Tramps of the Woods" were holding out against the notorious Duke of Alva.

A series of delays, and intrigues, and compromises —Philippe Strozzi agreeing to turn over half of his men for the royal army—but on August 29, 1572, they were to have sailed from Bordeaux; twenty-eight warships with four thousand soldiers, and a whole accumulation of military and agricultural machinery in some seventy transports. But Saint Bartholomew's massacre, on August 24, was to bring everything to a standstill.

And it may well have been a Brazilian destination which the sealed orders would have revealed; for in 1582 —the year of Dominique de Gourgues's lamented death —Catherine de Médicis was again sending Philippe

Strozzi out on another mysterious mission. A mission which ended in his own death and defeat by the Spaniards, but which is now known to have involved the conquest of the Azores on behalf of a Portuguese pretender, then a descent on Brazil as the price of that service.

12

The Portuguese—and one must turn for a moment to Honfleur, and to the Portuguese Indies, for a glimpse of Pierre Berthelot, Royal Pilot and Cartographer to the King of Portugal.

He was born at Honfleur, in 1600, the son of a ship's captain and doctor whom he accompanied as a boy on several voyages to Terre Neuve. Then in 1619 it was the Orient; three ships, two of them from Honfleur; Pierre Berthelot in the *Espérance,* destined to destruction by Dutch corsairs at Sumatra. He served in Dutch vessels for a while after that, learning the ins and outs of the islands and channels; so that in 1626, when he turned up at Malacca, the Portuguese were only too glad to employ him as pilot. In his spare time he made charts, some of which have found their way to the British Museum, and in 1629 he was at Goa, the Portuguese capital in the East Indies; chief pilot of a convoy of thirty vessels which he led brilliantly through several encounters with pirates.

He was in his thirties, he was ennobled, he held a royal commission—there was no question, apparently, of any return to Honfleur—when suddenly, in 1634, he turned his back on the sea, entering the monastic order of the Carmelites, received as Father Denis of the Nativity in 1638. And the Portuguese were dismayed; their best pilot turned monk; and in that same year,

when they were sending three galleys on a mission of importance to Achem, they came to the monastery and insisted that Father Denis should pilot the squadron. Nothing else would do, and when the galleys sailed Father Denis was aboard, in his Carmelite gown.

They reached Achem, after a battle with two Dutch corsairs in which Father Denis was wounded—and in Achem they were all seized by the natives, most of them slaughtered, some of them, with Father Denis, thrown into prison. And there, because he would not abjure his faith, Father Denis, Royal Pilot of Portugal, was murdered by a Christian apostate.

And to this day in Honfleur they cherish the memory of their Normandy boy who went out to make a name for himself in the Indies—with a sailorman's smile for that Carmelite gown, forgotten in the midst of the battle.

13

Since the days of Jacques Cartier, Canada had been forgotten as the goal of official venturing, but there had been a constant going and coming of ships, fishing and furring, for Terre Neuve and for Tadoussac on the Saint Lawrence; with occasional attempts at permanent establishments on those shores.

In 1578 the Breton Troïlus du Mesgouez, Marquis de La Roche, had wanted to try it, but his ship had been captured; in 1584, another ship of his had been wrecked off Brouage; in 1598—to such an extent did the religious wars interrupt the chronology of external affairs—in 1598 he had a commission from Henry IV as Governor of Canada, Terre Neuve, Labrador and Sable Island; and on that last cheerless strip of sand—inhabited

by seals, and by the wild descendants of pigs left there by a ship in 1518—he temporarily deposited sixty colonists from Honfleur; leaving them, of necessity, to their fate when his ship was driven by tempests back to France; himself financially ruined, handing over his privileges to Pierre Chauvin of Honfleur. And a matter of five years before anyone thought to bring the Sable Islanders home; eleven survivors with a great quantity of furs.

Pierre Chauvin, a Huguenot captain in the navy of Henry IV, was one of the foremost *armateurs* of Honfleur, associated with another sea dog of that port, François Dupont-Gravé, a veteran of the fur trade; and in 1599 the two of them secured a ten year monopoly of the furs in New France, on condition of transporting fifty colonists a year. In 1600, consequently, Pierre Chauvin sailed for Tadoussac, taking with him a friend of the King, Pierre du Gua, Lord of Monts; taking with him also sixteen colonists, and forgetting that part of the contract on subsequent voyages. And when he died, in 1602, the monopoly passing to the Lord of Chaste, Governor of Dieppe, the latter was anxious to send an expedition to investigate proper locations for a colony, to go up the Saint Lawrence and look at those places that Jacques Cartier had seen. Stadacona and Hochelaga again being talked of—yes, and the road to China—after all these years. François Dupont-Gravé would command the two ships, and it seemed advisable that he should be accompanied by the Geographer Royal, Samuel de Champlain.

He had been born, presumably in 1570, at Brouage; in Huguenot country, his father a ship captain, and his name, Samuel, more common in Huguenot families than

in Catholic, but throughout his career he professed the Catholic faith. Bred to the sea, but with a passion for drawing, the religious wars of the Holy League found him fighting the Spaniards for Henry IV; in 1598, when by the terms of the treaty the Spanish garrison at Le Blavet was to be allowed passage home by sea, it was his uncle, Pilot Major of Spain succeeding Sebastian Cabot, who had charge of the movement, and invited him to Cadiz in his ship, the *Saint Julien.* He spent several months at Cadiz and Seville, making sketches; then, in 1599, when the *Saint Julien* was taken by the Spanish government for a voyage to America, they gave him command of her. And for the next two years —something which no Frenchman had ever been able to do—he sailed in and out of the Spanish possessions, afloat and ashore, visiting them from Mexico to the Isthmus, taking notes, and always drawing his pictures and maps—which, on his return to France in 1601, he placed in the King's hands, receiving in exchange a patent of nobility and his post as Geographer Royal; preserving from his quite unusual experience an increased taste for cartography and a desire to promote the establishment of a colonial empire for France. And in 1603 he was to go with François Dupont-Gravé to Canada.

They sailed, in March, from Honfleur—Honfleur was always to be one of the nurseries, so to speak, of Canada—a slow, rough crossing to Tadoussac; then in a small boat up the river; enquiring of the Indians about China and ways to the Pacific—that illusion was not yet to perish—hearing from them of some very large lakes in the West, and a thundering waterfall. But when Samuel de Champlain arrived in France in

September, the Lord of Chaste was dead; the fur monopoly was in a great state over smugglers and fur runners, for at Saint Malo, for instance, they had no respect for monopolies; Pierre de Monts, aided by merchants of Rouen and Saint Malo—merchants and fishermen saw these matters in a different light—of La Rochelle and Saint Jean de Luz, was preparing an expedition, not to Canada proper, but to Acadia, across the "Passage of the Campsau" from Cap Breton Island. Two ships from Havre, some colonists and a company of nobles; among them François Dupont-Gravé, and the aged Jean de Biencourt, Lord of Poutrincourt, determined to find a refuge for himself and his family from the upheavals of the Old World in that new land. And of course Samuel de Champlain must go.

In May, 1604, they were inspecting Acadia; turning into "French Bay," which was the Bay of Fundy; looking at Annapolis Basin, which they called Port Royal; landing, finally, on an island at the mouth of the Sainte Croix river, building their houses while the ships went home; Samuel de Champlain spending two months at his map making along the coast to the South. A delightful spot—in summer. But the winter came swiftly and terribly, the island was cut off from the mainland by ice, some of the wine froze, the Protestants and Catholics present quarrelled a good deal, men died of the scurvy. The place was untenable. In June, 1605, Pierre de Monts and Samuel de Champlain, with a small party in the pinnace, went as far South as Cape Cod prospecting for sites, but found none to their taste; in August they were moving the settlement over to the North side of Port Royal—the first permanent settlement in North America, outside of the Spanish domin-

ions—building their houses again, watching Pierre de Monts's departure for France. If he should not return by July, 1606, they were to abandon Port Royal and go in the boats to the nearest haven where they might expect to find fishing vessels.

And on July 16, 1606—when Samuel de Champlain was through with his surveying voyage to Florida—Pierre de Monts had not returned, and all but two of the Port Royal people embarked in the boats for Cap Breton. But while they were on their way, in July, there was a ship from France, the *Jonas,* and they all turned back to Port Royal again. There had been trouble in France over the monopoly, fur running and confiscation, and Pierre de Monts was in all sorts of legal difficulties; but Jean de Poutrincourt had also returned to France, and he had been able, with many vicissitudes, to take out a new batch of colonists in the *Jonas*—a hard lot who had had to be kept locked up at La Rochelle until the ship was ready.

And now Jean de Poutrincourt had secured a large grant of land at Port Royal, but he would have preferred a more clement southerly situation, and Samuel de Champlain must go with him on another coastwise prospecting journey—which might so easily have come upon one of Giovanni Verrazano's bays of Narragansett or of the Hudson, and, as Mr. Wrong has suggested, perhaps the whole history of France, England and Holland in America changed in consequence—only he insisted on seeing that more immediate shore which Samuel de Champlain had already charted, so that they only reached the island that is now Nantucket, and did not reappear until November at Port Royal, where

the settlers received them with feasting and carnival, and a float representing Neptune and his horses. And the winter passed gaily.

But in the spring of 1607—this is of necessity only the most threadbare recital of these after all esssentially colonial affairs, intended simply to set forth the maritime career of Samuel de Champlain—in May, the *Jonas* was at "the Campsau," and letters for Port Royal. The fur monopoly cancelled, as the result of pressure in France, and the trade thrown open to a jamboree of Norman and Malouin, Rochellese and Basque vessels waging miniature wars upon each other. Port Royal to be abandoned. And so they came home, Pierre de Monts, and François Dupont-Gravé, and Samuel de Champlain. But Jean de Poutrincourt decided to hold his estate; with goings and comings, and complications with the Jesuits, there was something subsisting at Port Royal until 1613, when the English from Virginia swooped down on that remote threat to their colony, and without palaver for the time being destroyed it. And it was by the survivors of Port Royal that Acadia was settled, and by their descendants; until they, in turn, were cruelly expelled by the English, in 1755, in that "Great Derangement" of the Acadians—the background of Longfellow's *Evangeline* —which is the tragedy of the history of Canada, and of Nova Scotia.

14

Samuel de Champlain was not yet forty; he had spent two years navigating in West Indian waters, four more on the coasts of northern America and Acadia; acquainting himself with the problems of Canadian

colonization; the principal part of his career still lay before him.

For in 1608, with Pierre de Monts, he had already persuaded the King to restore the fur monopoly; company ships were to sail from Honfleur, to Port Royal, and to the Saint Lawrence again; and Samuel de Champlain, accompanied by François Dupont-Gravé, was empowered to established a colony at Stadacona, and to govern New France. At Tadoussac there was trouble with the Basque fishermen fur poachers; a battle in which François Dupont-Gravé was wounded; more trouble from them later, and a conspiracy to do away with Samuel de Champlain; but on July 2 he had gone ashore at Stadacona, and something had been inaugurated which was to endure for three hundred years, and still endures. For Samuel de Champlain had founded Quebec, and Jacques Cartier's dream was come true.

And there, in his Canada—until death came to him at Quebec, in 1635—Samuel de Champlain remained for twenty-seven years; pushing on indefatigably through his woods; striving to reach Hudson's Bay; exploring to Lake Champlain, and to Huron and Ontario—always seeking that passage to China—making many more voyages back and forth across the Ocean. And there one must leave him, beset with colonial difficulties which do not fall within the scope of these pages —except that one may not entirely pass over the Kirke episode.

The fur monopoly had been maintained; vested, in 1621, in the Montmorency Company, headed by Guillaume de Caen, General of the Fleet of New France, a Dieppe Huguenot merchant navigator of considerable experience and renown. But in 1627, when Cardinal de

Richelieu was experimenting with those commercial Companies which one has already seen operating at Saint Malo and Nantes, his Company of the Hundred Associates, transformed into the Company of New France, was given all the Canadian privileges, with the proviso, supported by the Jesuits, that it transport thenceforth only Catholic colonists to Quebec. No more Huguenots, who until that time had furnished a very large element of such emigration to Canada as had occurred. And in 1628, during the Cardinal's siege of La Rochelle, a little fleet of the new Company ships sailed from Dieppe.

But another expedition had been preparing in England. A privateering expedition against Canada—since England was at war with France, ostensibly on behalf of the Huguenots—organized by the Earl of Stirling, holder of a patent from James I for all Acadia which he now proposed to put in force, some of his people having already, in 1626, descended on Port Royal and seized it. And with him a merchant, Jarvis Kirke, once a resident of Dieppe where he had married a French wife; three of whose five seafaring, partly French, and in fact more French than English, sons came to participate in the adventure, along with numbers of other French Huguenot captains; for with them it was not now a question of England and France, but of Protestant and Catholic. Louis Kirke, "Vice Admiral" Thomas Kirke, "Admiral" David Kirke commanding the squadron, with his sailing master, Huguenot Jacques Michel, formerly in the service of Guillaume de Caen. And when the Catholic Company ships arrived off Gaspé, the Kirkes were there to receive them and capture them, with the provisions for Quebec; sending

word afterwards to Samuel de Champlain to demand his surrender, but returning to England without it.

But in 1629 the Kirkes were back at Tadoussac, and this time Louis Kirke appeared at Quebec, where Samuel de Champlain was without men or supplies, and the surrender took place; Catholic Quebec to the Huguenot Kirkes of Dieppe, under the English flag. And some pillaging of Jesuit houses by the Huguenot captains, exhorted by Jacques Michel; but Samuel de Champlain was well treated, and conveyed to England—and a great mutual recrimination at Tadoussac between all these Catholic and Huguenot Frenchmen in opposite camps.

And for three years Louis Kirke governed Quebec, while French and English diplomacy worked its tortuous way to a treaty, in 1632, under the terms of which Canada and Port Royal were given back to France. So that Huguenot Louis Kirke had in turn to surrender; to another Huguenot, as it chanced, Emery de Caen, nephew of Guillaume de Caen, three years before a captive of the man he was now superseding. And in 1633 Samuel de Champlain returned, and the interlude of the Huguenot captains, the rule of Dieppe in Quebec, were forgotten.

15

One must go forward into the eighteenth century, leaving Canada to its wars—but one will return on a later page to the great Pierre d'Iberville—and, indeed, leaving all France to those wars which, from 1666 until 1764, were to encumber some fifty years of the nation's history, and certain naval episodes of which one will subsequently examine.

A great interest now, in that eighteenth century, in

science, in hydrography, in the Chabert-Cogolin, the Granier-Rochon surveying voyages of 1750 and 1767 to America and to the Indian Ocean; in geography, in the expeditions of the French Academy of Sciences for the study of the equator, of the polar regions, of astronomy, of natural history, of botany; the La Condamine and Maupertuis expeditions of 1735, the La Caille and de Pagès expeditions of 1750 and 1767 again. An interest in geography for its own sake, quite aside from commercial considerations; as one author expressed it in 1756, "let us think of nothing but geography, of the pure eagerness to discover, to acquire for the world new lands, new inhabitants." A great interest in voyages around the globe, always a novelty for some reason, although of the twenty odd circumnavigations since Magellan's prior to 1768 half were accomplished by French mariners.

A great tumult, consequently, of national approbation for Louis de Bougainville when he returned, in 1769, from his two year adventure around the world; a voyage that attracted as much attention as did the later one of Captain Cook. An advocate before the Parliament, author of a treatise on integral calculus, Fellow, when still in his twenties, of the Royal Society of England, Louis de Bougainville, brilliant and dashing, had joined the army in 1756 to serve with the Marquis de Montcalm in Canada. At the close of the disastrous Seven Years' War, he had left the army with the rank of colonel, to enter the navy; and in 1764, with some of the deported refugees from Acadia, he was founding a colony on the Malouin Islands, now the Falklands. And when, in 1766, for diplomatic reasons, the Malouin Islands were to be handed over to Spain, the formalities

of the transfer were entrusted to Louis de Bougainville, with instructions to continue on across the Pacific in the interest of science—and a little, perhaps, for the purpose of demonstrating the vitality of French maritime enterprise in the midst of that general ruin brought about by the policies of Louis XV.

And in March, 1769, when he came back to Saint Malo, having sailed from Brest in December, 1766, he had visited the Dangerous Archipelago—the Paumotous—New Cytherea—Tahiti, where one of his companions, the Prince of Nassau, was later to boast that he had had an amorous affair with the Queen—the Archipelago of the Navigators—Samoa—and the Great Cyclades—the New Hebrides. And he would have gone on to New Holland, which was to be Australia, but scarcity of supplies sent him to New Guinea, to Batavia, and home across the Indian Ocean, touching at the Ile de France which is now Mauritius. A quite noteworthy cruise.

Other voyages followed; the Surville and Kerguelen expeditions into the South Atlantic and Pacific—ill-fated affairs, clouded by severities and cruelties—the voyages of Captain Marchand to Alaska and into the South Seas, where he discovered Nukuhiva; but prior to his adventure another big expedition was under way, prepared with great care under the supervision of Louis XVI. The celebrated voyage of Jean de Lapérouse, which was for forty years to come to furnish one of the greatest mysteries of the sea that had ever been known.

Born at Albi, not far from Carcassonne and not very near to the sea, Jean de Lapérouse had entered the navy, to become a squadron commander. Now, in 1785, he was to go into the Pacific, with a company of scientists

in two fine ships, the "Astrolabe" and the "Compass," for the purpose of co-ordinating all of Captain Cook's voyages and rounding out the accumulating information concerning those waters. He sailed, in August, from Brest, around the Horn, proceeding up to Alaska, returning down the American coast as far as Monterey. Then across the Pacific, stopping at Guam, to Macao. Then into the Sea of Japan and off Siberia for six months. Then, in September, 1787, to Avatscha in Kamchatka, whence his interpreter, the Count of Lesseps, was sent back to France with the records of the voyage to date. Then South to Samoa, in December; to Australia, in January, 1788; to Botany Bay, in February, where letters were despatched. And from then on not a word, not a sign, not a trace. Jean de Lapérouse and his ships had vanished.

In France the Revolution had begun, but in 1791 they found time to send out the "Research" and the "Hope" under Rear Admiral d'Entrecasteaux to comb the South Seas for the missing expedition. There was a rumour at the Cape of Good Hope that men in French uniforms had been seen near the Admiralty Islands. But Jean de Lapérouse was not there. He was not anywhere to be found, while for two years and more the "Research" and the "Hope" cruised this way and that, looking for a needle in the Pacific haystack of islands and reefs; the Rear Admiral dying in 1794, his royalist and republican officers now quarrelling among themselves, selling their vessels, finally, to the Dutch, separating to return to France as best they might. Jean de Lapérouse and his ships had vanished.

Actually, he had probably seen Rear Admiral d'Entrecasteaux pass by in the distance; some of his men

had undoubtedly made those smoke signals which, in 1791, Captain Edwards in H. M. S. *Pandora,* searching for the famous mutineers of the *Bounty,* had observed on the Island of Vanikoro in the Santa Cruz group—observed and ignored, ascribing them to the natives.

Nineteen years later, in 1813, an English merchantman, during the course of an affray with some Fiji islanders, landed her mate, Dillon, to rescue a certain Martin Bushart, beachcomber, and a Lascar, who asked to be deposited on the first island that came, which turned out to be Tucopia. Thirteen years later, in 1826, Dillon, now captain of his own *Saint Patrick,* passing Tucopia, remembered the castaways and found them still living. The Lascar had in his possession an antique silver sword guard, secured from the natives; to Dillon's enquiries, Martin Bushart replied that on their arrival at Tucopia they found the natives treasuring this sword guard and other utensils of silver, which it seemed that they had obtained from the natives of Manicola, or Vanikoro. They had a tale of some sort to tell of great ships, long ago, lost on the reefs of Vanikoro. And on the sword guard were engraved initials corresponding to those of Jean François de Galaup, Count of Lapérouse.

And not only that, but the Lascar had been to Vanikoro, and there he claimed to have seen two aged white men, survivors of such a wreck. But in 1826, after being becalmed for days, Captain Dillon was not able to reach Vanikoro, and it was in 1827 that the English government at Calcutta provided him with a vessel in which to follow up his investigation with Martin Bushart. They went to Tucopia again, where more and more relics were produced by the natives; then to Vani-

koro, where at last, after forty years, the mystery of Jean de Lapérouse was unravelled from the recollections of a venerable native chief. Two great ships, long ago, anchoring for the night; overtaken by a fearful hurricane, driven, the one on the reef of Paiow, the other on Whanou; a great washing ashore of wreckage and corpses—Captain Dillon was to be shown a whole assortment of china, and pewter, and silverware, a ship's bell and some guns, and a piece of board bearing the *fleur de lys*—the survivors in the end kindly received, some of them scattering among the islands, some of them eventually building a little vessel from salvaged timbers, sailing away to an unknown destiny.

But there was no trace of the two survivors whom the Lascar had seen. It was true that two men had refused to go with the departing vessel; and one was a "chief" and the other his servant. But the "chief" had died "about three years ago"—that would have been in 1824—and the servant had gone to another island. And while Captain Dillon found guns and oak timbers in the sands at the sites of the wrecks, there was no sign of that "chief's" habitation or of his grave, or of any message that he might have left, carved or burned into wood.

It was the wreckage, of course, from the *Astrolabe* and the *Boussole;* and the "chief" was Jean de Lapérouse, without any doubt, whom the Lascar had seen—and still living in the 1820s, concealing his identity, preferring the eternal monotony of Vanikoro to the public assumption of what he must have considered the disgrace of his sailor's mishap. A sudden storm in the night, and thirty-seven years of self imposed ostracism. So it was always believed. Captain

Dillon returned to Calcutta where they sent him at once to France with the things that he had salvaged. And while the King—a restored brother of Louis XVI—received him with very great honours, the Count of Lesseps was still there to identify the relics, stating that the carved board was probably a piece of the *Boussole's* stern decoration. And the Dumont d'Urville expedition was ordered out to put up a monument, and bring back what there was to be found near the sunken ships.

And at Albi, to-day, around the statue of Jean de Lapérouse, and in the Museum of the Navy at Paris, one may see some of these things, mute survivors of disaster and wasted lives, infinitely sad.

16

But if Jean de Lapérouse had perished, that was not a reason for discontinuing scientific voyages. Jules de Blosseville was to disappear, in turn, somewhere off Greenland; in 1837, another Dumont d'Urville expedition was to go South to the Barrier, following it for long distances, establishing Louis Philippe Land, Adélie Land and other localities on the antarctic continent. And before that, before the fate of Jean de Lapérouse was known, others had been at it; the Baudin expedition, for instance, to the South Pacific.

Nicolas Baudin, of the Island of Ré off La Rochelle, an excellent sailor, had served in both the merchant and royal navies; he had made two scientific voyages, one to India and the other to the West Indies; in 1800, he was to go to the unknown parts of New Holland, for hydrographic exploration and for the collection of use-

ful plants and strange animals. He was to command the "Geographer"—and with him in the "Naturalist," one of the finest seamen of his time, Emmanuel Hamelin, whose name will recur in these pages—two fine new corvettes supplied by Bonaparte; and the great Bernardin de Saint Pierre keenly interested, also, eager to have them study ocean currents, full of notions concerning the welfare of sailors, insisting that music be provided for them in order to keep up their spirits.

And whether or not there was music, they sailed in October, from Havre, for the Cape of Good Hope; visited Van Diemen's Land and the Southwest coast of Australia; rounded the southern extremity of Van Diemen's Land; laid up for a while in Botany Bay; and later explored almost the whole Australian contour. And in December, 1802, Emmanuel Hamelin was sent home with a shipload of records and specimens, furnished with a passport from England—for there was war again—detained, nonetheless, in English waters, then released for Havre with his scientists and menageries. But for Nicolas Baudin there was to be no return, for in August, 1803, he was at the Ile de France, and there, in September, he died.

And when the Napoleonic wars were over, in 1815, when the country was drained of resources and the ports stagnating—they were at it again, as soon as there was a chance; shipowners this time, questing out to sea for new fields of commercial endeavour. At Bordeaux especially, where, in 1817, the Philippons, and a branch of the great Balguerie family of pre-revolutionary times, were sending two ships out to Cochin China, forerunners of a repeated traffic with the Orient, links in a long chain of influences which were to result in the

navy's conquest, some twenty years later, of France's colonial possessions in China.

And while one Balguerie was looking towards the Orient, another, known as Balguerie Junior, head of the foremost *armateur* house of the day, was sending his three masted *Bordelais* on what, considering contemporary conditions, was a noteworthy voyage, endowed with mercantile courage and vision, and a fine maritime vitality. A voyage that took her from Bordeaux, in October, 1816, to Valparaiso and Peru, to San Francisco and British Columbia; then to the Marquesas and Polynesia, to the Sandwich Isles and to China; then to Macao, to Mauritius, to the Cape of Good Hope; and home to Bordeaux in November, 1819, after an absence of three years and one month.

And if during the wars, during all the long wars, from the seventeenth century down through the Revolution to the end of Napoleon, one colonial empire had vanished—in America, in cherished Santo Domingo, in various parts of the globe—the Normandy and Brittany fishermen were never to abandon their departures for that ancient Terre Neuve; men of the Balguerie stamp, and their seamen and captains—Cartiers, Ribaults and Champlains of a later time—were still to adorn those great ports of France, sending the ships out to sea, to found, and renew, and develop another colonial empire; in Algeria, in Tunisia, in Morocco; in Senegal, and on the Ivory Coast and along the Congo; in Madagascar; in Tonkin, in Annam and Cambodia.

Africa and Indo-China as a destination for mariners; new names calling across the high seas in place of old echoes from Canada, from Brazil and from Florida.

CHAPTER V

CLEARED FOR ACTION

1

WITHOUT too much concern for the intricacies of diplomacy, the circumstances of defeat or victory, or the remote consequences of battles—with no concern whatever for any exact chronology of historical continuity—one must look, now, at certain episodes, secure glimpses of certain personalities, enshrined in the naval annals of France.

And in 1511, as a result of the Italian wars—to open the chronicle at random—a Holy League, consisting of the Pope, the Emperor, Spain, Venice, Florence, Genoa, the English and the Swiss, had been formed against Louis XII of France. In June, 1512, consequently, Admiral Howard of England was raiding Brittany—only recently, in 1491, acquired for the realm through the marriage of Charles VIII with the Duchess Anne—burning Le Conquet, and Crozon, and other places near Brest; burning, as it chanced, the manor belonging to Hervé de Portzmoguer, or as it was also spelled, Primoguet, a Breton noble who commanded the King's *Cordelière*. And in August, Admiral Howard was out again. All along the coast, from Dinan to Brest, the beacons were relaying the approach of a large English fleet; at Brest, there was a

scramble to get out of the harbour, so that Hervé de Portzmoguer had to sail with a crowd of guests on board, his father-in-law and other relatives, a company of nobles and ladies. But when Admiral Howard appeared with some fifty warships and transports, the twenty-one French ships waiting outside the "Goulet" of Brest could only withdraw, leaving any rear guard action to be sustained by the larger *nefs*—the *Dieppoise*, the *Louise* carrying Vice Admiral de Clermont, and the *Cordelière*.

And very soon the *Louise* was out of commission, run in behind the rocks, and the Vice Admiral quite content to stay there; but the *Dieppoise* was hard at it with five English ships—she fought them for seven hours until some vessels from Le Croisic got her away—and the *Cordelière* was engaged with the *Mary James*, while the rest of the English fleet drew near, led by the towering *Regent* and *Sovereign*. But the *Cordelière's* fire dismasted the *Sovereign*, and when the *Regent* went about she was under the *Cordelière's* lee, and the legendary battle began. They were of a size, some seven hundred tons; the *Cordelière* a three-masted carack, the "great nef of Morlaix"—that port's contribution to the royal navy—the *Regent* four-masted, with the additional "bonaventure" mizzen; at her launching in 1490 the pride of Henry VII's navy, copied from French models; both of them monsters of their day, slung with *pavasses*—the painted shields that survived from the old Viking custom—spitting fire, and stone, and metal from several hundred big guns and lesser serpentines, basilisks and culverines, falcons, scorpions, "worms" and *crapaudeaux*.

An unequal fight; the *Cordelière* alone—the *Diep-*

poise was much too busy elsewhere—against the *Regent* and the *Mary James*, and other English *nefs* nosing in all the time. But she gave as much as she received, perhaps more; the *Regent's* captain was dead, his ship was dismasted, the *Mary James* was a shambles; and when the *Cordelière* was sinking, riddled with holes, dripping with blood from hundreds of corpses, when her battle was over—then she grappled and boarded; but was boarded herself, and there were more English alive than the *Cordelière* could muster of her own people. And then it happened, by accident or perhaps by design. Hervé de Portzmoguer was up in the rigging, directing the battle, when the *Cordelière* suddenly blew up under him. Blew up with a great roar of flames, setting fire as well to the *Regent*, fast to her side; and both of them going down together, flaming catastrophes, and on the *Cordelière* alone some twelve hundred dead; Hervé de Portzmoguer and his men, and his guests, and his relatives.

It went into epics—it went first into a naval enquiry, on complaints by the master of the *Dieppoise* against Vice Admiral de Clermont, summoning the French and the English captains as witnesses—and then into epics; an international controversy in verse between the Herald of Brittany and the Chancellor of the Exchequer of England, concerning the heroism of Hervé de Portzmoguer, and all of it to be submitted, it was proposed, to the decision of Erasmus. But long before that the *Cordelière* had been avenged—in the very same waters, within sight of the Crosses erected to "Primoguet"—by a very great sailor indeed, a seaman of worldwide reputation, France's Admiral of the Levant, Prégent de Bidoux, whom Rhodes was to call

for in 1522, and who was to die at the hands of the Turks.

And in April, 1513, he had Admiral Howard caught between his ten galleys and brigantines and the squadron of the Admiral of France; and some shore batteries on Kermorvan Point to help out. And because the English thought nothing of the "spider" galleys, Admiral Howard, reserving his ships for Admiral Du Chillou, decided to attack the galleys with all his light vessels, leading the way in the *Rose;* sailing, before he knew it, into a murderous cross fire; putting the *Rose* alongside of the captain galley, leaping aboard—finding the *Rose* broken loose from her grapplings, himself abandoned with a handful of men, flinging away his golden Admiral's whistle as the French pikemen tumbled his body over the side.

And in Portsmouth afterwards, when the English had scrambled home, they were saying that their captains would sooner have gone to Purgatory than fight the "spiders" again.

2

One has seen the beginnings of the royal *navire* under the sailor kings, Philip IV and Charles V, the attempts to establish a definite King's navy; but what with civil and foreign wars, the varying alternations of diplomacy and policy, the changing tendencies of kingly and ministerial attitudes, it was not until the seventeenth century that the matter was again given creative thought and the foundations of a renewed organization that was through good and evil days essentially to endure. Not until Cardinal de Richelieu became Minister, in 1624.

Armand-Jean Du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, came of sailor stock. He was the great-grandson of that Admiral Du Chillou of Prégent de Bidoux's day, creator of the port of Havre; he was the grandson of François II Du Plessis, a captain in the navy; he was the son of François III Du Plessis, an armer of corsairs; an uncle had served in the Mediterranean, a brother in Brazil. The sea was in his blood, the navy in his mind, and his will was a rod of iron. There must be a proper navy, there must be adequate ships, and ports, and crews, and the whole thing must be under the King, under his Minister, under a strong central authority. The Cardinal had had enough of the various local admiralties that had sprung up, enough of the Admiral of France himself with his privileges and powers. Political appointees, too often, of dubious capacity and notorious self interest; very seldom like that Admiral de Graville who, under Charles VIII and Louis XII, had kept himself clear of intrigues, advanced money for the navy, and bequeathed eighty thousand *livres* to the State "to ease the poor people," recognizing the many benefits that he had received from his "big estates, great gifts and profits." And so the Cardinal abolished the Admiralty, substituting for it the Grand Mastery, which was to become the Ministry of Marine. And himself Grand Master of France.

As for the rest, being a sailor at heart, he turned to sailors for advice; to his uncle, Commander de la Porte; and to an old Breton sea dog, to Isaac de Launay-Razilly, a squadron commander who had spent some twenty-five years in "the four parts of the world." And in his very fine report, Commander de Razilly

admitted his inability to "write a polite discourse"; but he knew that "whosoever is master of the sea has a great power on the land"; and that there was need "that the King should say publicly every day that his favourites are those who will build ships and have the courage to undertake long distance voyages"; and that nobles should be encouraged to interest themselves in maritime affairs, and the rewards of nobility made accessible to *armateurs.* And he had other precise recommendations, concerning commerce and colonies, ideas concerning Companies which the Cardinal was to adopt, and what he had to say was used by the Cardinal as the basis for his Regulation for the Sea, for which he obtained royal approval in 1626.

And while Charles of England looked on and wondered, the Cardinal began to buy ships right and left; because they were more up to date at their business, he sent for Dutch constructors and began to build ships of his own—some of them astonishing ships, like that fabulous *Couronne,* built by Charles Morien of Dieppe, "wider than the big gallery of the Louvre," so big, indeed, that the ports were not safe for her. And the Cardinal began to build up personnel, dividing them rigorously into navigators and fighters—the seed of a caste there, of course, the noble "sword gentry"; and trouble always with those obstreperous, haughty, insubordinate Southerners of the excessively proud and exclusive Galley Corps—taking sailors wherever he found them, privateers, long distance captains, *armateurs,* preferably "hefty mariners nurtured on sea water," as he expressed it. Squadron commanders such as Razilly, and Garnier, and Mantin, and des Gouttes, his "Father of the Sea." And in the new ordinance of 1642, after

the Naval Council at Brouage, this general order to the fleet—"Let all have perpetually before their eyes and remember that the King has placed the said ships in their hands therein to die rather than surrender them to an enemy or commit in them the slightest cowardice in the world."

And they were doing well for themselves, in the Spanish wars, under Henri de Sourdis, Archbishop, incongruously enough, of Bordeaux; under the Duke of Brézé—when suddenly, in the midst of it all, in that same year of the Ordinance, the Cardinal died. And the King a year later.

3

Louis XIV was a minor; the new Minister, Cardinal Mazarin, was a politician; the country was soon in the throes of the "Fronde"—another Prince of Condé stirring up rebellion—the navy was utterly neglected, starved of funds, paralyzed by administrative corruption, allowed to fritter away; so that a Vice Admiral could write that he would "rather herd cows" than have anything to do with it. But, unwittingly, the Cardinal had one great gift, the gift of a man, to make to the naval cause of France; unwittingly as regards the naval implications, but not unwittingly as regards the value of the man, his secretary; for at his death, in 1661, the Cardinal was saying to the King that "I owe you everything, Sire, but I believe that I am evening things up a little by giving you Colbert."

Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the son of generations of middle class merchants at Reims—possessed of a yearning for nobility and wealth, his only foible—Secretary to Cardinal Mazarin in 1647, his twenty-eighth

year; Intendant of Finance; Member of the Council of the Grand Master of Navigation in 1661, his first step in that direction; Comptroller General of Finance, after having unravelled the misdeeds of Superintendent Fouquet; Secretary of State; Minister of Marine. One must see this extraordinary man, with his poor digestion, his insomnia, and gout, and fevers; at the height of his career, besides all his offices of State, responsible to Louis XIV for Public Buildings, for Arts and Manufactures, for the Royal Library, for Commerce and Consulates, for the East and West Indies Companies, for the affairs of the Clergy, for the Royal Household, for the district of Orleans and Ile de France, for the City of Paris. The King's truck-horse, until he died of it all in 1683.

A man endowed with all the methodical, middle class virtues, risen to the highest stations in the realm, exposed by those very qualities and circumstances to the pitfalls of some very deep rooted faults—a mania for rules, and routine, and restrictions; a passion for meddlesome supervision; a disastrous capacity, in his conception of economics and commerce, for destroying when he wished to create, strangling when he wished to reanimate, impoverishing when he wished to enrich; an unimaginative persistence in the setting aside of private endeavour, in the artificial acceleration and modification of unmovable processes of individual habit and public custom; an obstinacy of optimism for certain Colbertine policies in the face of their evident inadequacy. A man, if ever there was one, of excellent intentions, with a little book of infallible rules for every contingency. But a man of "unshakable probity," of "infinite application," of "insatiable" curiosity to learn,

of meticulous prudence, of breathless loyalty and of gigantic industry. An incredible man; one of the most remarkable men that France has ever produced; and for the navy—in spite of his mania for rules, his horror of uncoded initiative, his absorption in automatic perfection—a tower of strength, a founder, a builder, an organizer, a provider, a toiler whose work still remains an inspired example of foresight and energy.

For himself, for his relatives, he confessed that "I burn with the desire to see our family elevate itself by the paths of honour and virtue and to have everyone agree that we deserve the fortune that we have." And he was not to be disappointed. His brothers were to become ambassadors, bishops, generals, his daughters duchesses, his sons high officers on land and sea; one of them, the oldest, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay, closely associated with his father's labours, destined to succeed him in office. From others, Jean-Baptiste Colbert demanded "application, diligence and fire"; he wished to "animate everybody," and he must have industry and obedience, obedience, always obedience. Obey, and "believe that everything was for the best." No criticisms and no cliques. So he himself expressed it.

For the navy, for maritime affairs in general, his creed was to "re-establish the glory and the honour of the kingdom on the sea, by again putting to sea a considerable number of ships, especially by again undertaking long distance voyages." If he was influenced by the more remote naval theories of that shipminded King, Henry II, his immediate inspiration was Cardinal de Richelieu; he "did nothing but develop the career which [the Cardinal] had entered," and "of all

those things which the Cardinal had undertaken for the glory of the kingdom, there were none more important than navigation and commerce." Peaceful, wealth producing maritime enterprises—only it was his fate to ruin them with his tariffs and Companies, and his officious paternalism—and a navy primarily established for the protection and maintenance of the merchant marine; a studious, disciplined, efficient, harmonious, obedient navy.

4

And of all the very great obstacles that he encountered—and that he should have been able to surmount them in any fashion whatever, regardless of ultimate consequences, remains a magnificent achievement—there was none, perhaps, greater than the original indifference of the King. Louis XIV was not in the least a sailor; he always infinitely preferred the glories of military operations, the proposals of his War Minister, Louvois; he was not interested in the sea; he never but seven times in his long life saw the sea; he never could be induced to look at an arsenal, seldom at a port, only very rarely at a ship; so that on the occasion of his last appearance on the coast, ships were still such a novelty to him that the simple procedure of sailors climbing in the rigging filled him with delighted amusement, striking him as a "spectacle as diverting for the entire Court as it was extraordinary and novel." A circus with acrobats.

But Minister Colbert found a way. If the King would not go to the ships, then the ships must be brought to the King. On the Grand Canal at Versailles, at "Little Venice," beautiful models of ships of

every description, from every country, and uniformed crews and galley slaves in attendance. So the Minister contrived to give the King some "slight idea of the magnificence of the navy." And the King was amenable; in the council room he gave up every Friday afternoon to the navy; he came to see eye to eye with his Minister—as long as it was Minister Colbert—he did his complete royal duty and mastered the details of naval affairs with devotion and thoroughness—as long as Minister Colbert was there, standing over him.

It is not necessary to inquire too closely into the mass of the Minister's administrative reforms—codified in 1681 in a great Ordinance so minute in every respect, organic and tactical, that it was to suffice for a century. His suppression of the Grand Mastery, with a nominal return to the Admiralty vested in figurehead princes—two infants to begin with—all authority remaining in the hands of a Ministry representing the King. His emphasized importance accorded to paper work officials, the "officers of the pen," opposed to and differentiated from the "officers of the sword"; his transformation of the Company of the Guards of the Grand Mastery into the Marine Guards training corps, open, supposedly, to any French boy, soon to become an exclusive, military, nobly born body, intensely punctilious, aloof and superior, the "Great Corps"—and the seeds, again, of bitter caste rivalries, of an endless jealousy between the bright, impetuous sword and the dull, disciplinarian pen, the fighters and the administrators and navigators, the nobles and the plebeians, the officers, whether fighting or not, who came from the Corps and those who did not, the "officers in red" and the "officers in blue"; a Colbertine system which was to

carry its defects into the Revolution, because, in the Colbertine manner, no matter how efficient, how productive of order and discipline, it ignored human nature. A nursery of cliques established by the Minister who held cliques in abhorrence.

His creation of the enrollment by "classes" of the maritime populations for compulsory service in the navy, with appropriate financial compensations and pensions—at a time, it must be remembered, when Huguenot ostracism and emigration were leaving noticeable gaps in the ranks of seafaring men—a legalized press gang, as it has been called, with all the evils attendant upon such a method, and in periods of war a destructive menace to the vitality of mercantile shipping; ruthlessly enforced, loathed by the populations in question, conducive to wholesale desertion, not from the navy alone but from the seafaring profession itself; but inevitable if men were to be had, if the habitual preference of seamen for the merchant service, in France as everywhere else, was to be curbed; no worse in principle than the contemporary press gangs of England and Holland, and more efficacious, capable of speedier and more voluminous turnouts. His decision, after trying out African negroes and American Indians, to use "convicts" for the galley gangs—for the beautiful *Réale,* for instance, whose gilded ornaments may still be seen in the Museum of the Navy—a step that gave rise to brutal abuses, and at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes to an unlimited deportation of Huguenots; but, again, men must be had if the navy was to exist.

An incessant activity of organization at Versailles, of construction along the coast. The great military

engineer, Vauban, putting up forts and coast defences, making of Dunkirk, strategically, the premier naval base of Europe, instituting the coast guard service—and more grief for the maritime populations—enlarging Toulon, providing it with enormous warehouses and yards. Rochefort erected by the Minister, and by his cousin, Charles Colbert, into "the largest, the most complete and the most magnificent arsenal in the kingdom"; and when, in spite of everything, what some of them called the "Great Folly" proved inadequate, the splendid harbour of Brest taken in hand by Abraham Duquesne and by Vauban, its entrance transformed into the "Dardanelles of France," its approaches rendered impregnable by the advanced works of Camaret and Bertheaume, its navy yard endowed with buildings which are still in use.

A great activity in those Colbertine foundations, the School of Gunnery, the School Frigate for officers, the Academy of Sciences, the Observatory, the Hydrographic Service; a constant production of very fine instruments and charts; a tremendous activity in the shipyards, and in the Council of Constructions where Inspector Langeron and Bernard Renau d'Eliçagaray —Little Renau, the "poet of the sea"—were establishing the mathematical formulas of a new era of ship building, based at first on a study of foreign methods, destined in time, in the eighteenth century and for a whole hundred years, to make of French naval architecture the text book of Europe, of prizes captured from the French navy the unquestioned models for continuous English imitation. Such superb vessels as the *Terrible*, the *Commerce de Marseille*, the *Sans Pareil* of 1794, which was still being copied in 1845.

Although in his day Abraham Duquesne persistently refused to furnish Minister Colbert, to the latter's uncomprehending annoyance, with that little manual of rules for ship building, that guide to automatic perfection which the Minister was so eager to have.

And some extraordinary *tours de force* in those shipyards, actuated by the incentive of the Minister's bonuses. A forty gun ship built by six hundred men in seven hours; a galley constructed, rigged, equipped and sent to sea in half a day; in ordinary routine work, never more than four months allowed for one vessel, which was an unprecedented average. In ten years, one hundred and eighty-eight fire ships, transports, frigates and ships of the line launched from French yards; in 1685, one hundred and twenty ships afloat carrying fifty guns or more. In 1665, already, the King's vanity requiring for his naval ensign the privilege of first salute from the vessels of all other nations, for many years enforcing the courtesy with impatient, dictatorial guns.

Minister Colbert had given France a new navy. A new navy, he thought, for pacific purposes, to protect commerce and foster it; and that meant fighting, too, plenty of it; in the Ponant, wiping out piracy, in the Mediterranean against the Dutch, smashing the Turks—only the Turks were for ever coming back—bombarding Algiers and Tripoli. Excellent training for some very great names, Duquesne, Tourville, Châteaurenault, Gabaret. A pacific, protective navy. But the King was to take it and make great political wars with it; or perhaps to a certain extent he made the wars because of it; and it was to be a militant, aggressive navy, devoted to the glorification of

Louis XIV, which was not what the Minister had intended.

But when he died, his son, the Marquis de Seignelay —trained from his youth by his father for the post which he now inherited; admitted, at the age of twenty-one, to the privilege of "signature" at the Ministry; his father's right and left hand during the last years—the Marquis de Seignelay was a very great lord, his father had brought him up to be one, with a turn for high politics, and the sword, in his eyes, always mightier than the pen, commerce and wealth of less import than war where the navy was concerned. A tremendous personage, pleasure loving in the midst of his labours, so that he died, suddenly, in his thirty-ninth year, while Madame de Sévigné exclaimed, "What a youth! What a fortune! What establishments! Nothing was lacking for his happiness: it seems to us that it is splendour that has died." And of those who followed him, who replaced the Colbert tradition at the Ministry, some were not to be so splendid.

But the guns were firing, as they were to continue to fire with brief interruptions for the next hundred years.

5

And when the guns were firing there was, to begin with, Duquesne.

Abraham Duquesne, the son of a Dieppe merchant captain, one of several brothers whose only education had been the instruction received from their father in the ways of a ship in the midst of the sea. An "unlicked bear," they called him at Court, and frowned on him. A plebeian, very crude in his manners, not a

product of the Great Corps. Not an "officer in red."

A Huguenot who resisted the efforts of Bossuet, even, to convert him, although his promotion, his dream of a vice admiralcy were at stake. A Protestant to the end of his days, in 1688; the brother-in-law of Suzanne Guiton, daughter of La Rochelle's Jean Guiton; the uncle, consequently, of Abraham Duquesne-Guiton, a brilliant naval commander—celebrated, in 1690, for his defeat with six ships of an English and Dutch fleet off Madras—who wound up his career as Governor General of Martinique and Lieutenant General of the navy, because he was willing to abjure. The grandson of Jean Guiton turned Catholic. Just as Job Forant abjured; one of four navy brothers, three of them killed in action, sons of Jean Guiton's Rear Admiral, Jacques Forant, fervent Huguenot who served with the English for years after the fall of La Rochelle, then as Rear Admiral of the Dutch until Louis XIV called him home at the close of his life; Job Forant, of whom Abraham Duquesne was writing, in 1680, to Minister Colbert, asking him, "How . . . do you allow Forant to rust, when he is one of the best pilots and soldiers?" And when Job Forant abjured he received his promotion at once. But Abraham Duquesne would never abjure.

And it was a pity, this religious restriction in the days of Louis XIV, in the years that preceded the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, for Abraham Duquesne should have had his vice admiralcy, or whatever he would have liked after some fifty years of noteworthy service at sea. Even though it was true that he had an abominable temper, a perpetually discontented disposition, a fault finding nature, obstinate,

contemptuous and autocratic—an "inconvenient humour," as Minister Colbert described it—which led him into continual quarrels, and criticisms, and contentions; so that the Minister had frequently to write to him to unruffle him, warning him that "the infinite difficulties which you raise on all occasions and on all subjects greatly grieve the King." But he was a fine fighter, a grand sailor, aggressive and initiating; one of the last of that school exemplified by the great Dutch Admiral, Ruyter, in a naval period in Europe which was turning rapidly to the prudent strategy of conservative lines of battle, to the cautious, preservative tactics of rigid fleet evolutions. "One of the most"—the words are Jean-Baptiste Colbert's—"one of the most experienced captains that we have had in our navy."

And in 1675, in the Mediterranean, Admiral Ruyter was waiting for Lieutenant General Duquesne. France was at war with Holland and Spain; in Sicily, Messina had rebelled against Spain, appealing to France; the Chevalier de Valbelle, with nine ships, had run the Spanish blockade of forty-one vessels; Abraham Duquesne, with ten ships, taking out Madame de Montespan's brother, the Duke of Vivonne, had sailed into a Spanish fleet of forty-three vessels in the Straits of Messina, putting them to flight when Valbelle, hearing the guns, came tearing out from Messina to help him. Now, in December, he was returning from Toulon with supplies—twenty ships and six fire ships, including the Tourville squadron—and Admiral Ruyter was waiting for him, waiting for his Spanish allies too, off the Liparian Islands, near Alicuri, with eighteen ships, nine galleys and several fire ships.

The fleets were in presence on January 7, 1676,

with Lieutenant General Duquesne driving the Dutch before him on that day; on January 8 they closed up, and Admiral Ruyter, watching the French advance in the windward berth, had "never seen a line approach in better order." For three hours the battle rolled on at close range, in a dying wind, and "in all his life Ruyter"—he was then seventy—"had never found himself in a heavier combat." He was withdrawing, finally, opening up a gap between himself and his rear guard into which the Tourville squadron was sent crashing; but the Gabaret squadron could not come up in time, and Admiral Ruyter got away, to Naples eventually, while Abraham Duquesne made his junction with Lieutenant General d'Alméras, returning to Messina around the entire island, a cruise of two weeks, in order to avoid the risk of battle in the dangerous Straits. And Admiral Ruyter was of the opinion that "the ships of France fought vigorously; the French did wonders."

In February Admiral Ruyter was out again, pursued by the French; in April the two fleets engaged, off Agosta. Twenty-seven Dutch and Spanish ships—but the Spanish held back throughout the battle, delaying the Dutch rear guard—with twenty-two galleys and lighter vessels; Abraham Duquesne with twenty-nine ships and eleven small vessels, and one more ship, the *Syrène,* sailing alone out of Agosta to take her place in the line, passing superbly down between the two fleets, saluting the Lieutenant General and rounding up into position. The sea was calm, the Dutch had the wind, their van guard opening up on the French at pistol range; Admiral Ruyter in the *Eendragt* and Guillaume d'Alméras in the *Lys* doing each other the honours of a furious bombardment. And soon the Dutch

Admiral was dangerously wounded in both legs, Lieutenant General d'Alméras killed, the *Lys* dropping out and Valbelle coming up to drive off the Dutch, finding himself with one other vessel at grips with four eighty-gun ships; the *Eendragt* and her consorts attacking the *Magnifique*, held off by her for an hour, passing across the front of the French centre, receiving the full fire of Abraham Duquesne's broadsides, sustaining hideous damage.

And still the Spaniards held back, and in the moonlight the two fleets drew apart, the battered Dutch to Syracuse and Palermo, the French to replenish their magazines. Three French squadron commanders and three Dutch captains had perished, and seven days later the great Admiral Ruyter, perhaps the greatest sailor of his time, was dead of his wounds, his glorious remains saluted with respectful honours by his courteous victors.

And in May the Duke of Vivonne was in front of Palermo with the fleet—and a clique pushing Tourville into the limelight in place of Duquesne—and when they were through sending their fire ships among the Spanish and Dutch, under cover of a brilliant attack, the enemy fleet had cut its cables, drifting into the harbour, explosions were firing projectiles over the terrified city, three thousand men were dead and a dozen ships in flames. The Dutch were in flight, out of the Mediterranean, not to return even in 1678, when Lieutenant General Châteaurenault smashed them up off Ushant. And Abraham Duquesne thought that in the ships under him there were "some very stout fellows of whom there was everything to hope," and that the King's navy would soon be "in repute." And Minister

Colbert was writing to him that "everything that you have done is so glorious, and you have given such advantageous proof of your valour, of your capacity and of your consummate experience in the profession of the sea, that nothing can be added to the glory which you have acquired."

But they could have made him a Vice Admiral.

6

Now in the case of Anne-Hilarion de Cotentin, Count of Tourville, there was never to be any trouble over his promotions, which in thirty-seven years were to carry him from a captaincy at twenty to the ranks of General of the King's naval armies, Vice Admiral and Marshal of France.

He was born of high lineage, in 1642, and as a young man, according to a contemporary description, he was "fair, absolutely dazzlingly fair, his eyes blue, with a fire and brilliancy difficult to sustain, his features delicate, in stature among the tallest; a better built man had hardly ever been seen, nor a better looking one." And with that he was polished, charming, fascinating, and of unlimited personal courage. A great lad with the ladies who at all times and in all places adored him.

He went to sea at eighteen, in the navy, against the Barbaresques, covering himself at once with glory and wounds, performing epics of personal valour; then in the service of Malta; and one must necessarily turn for a moment to Levantine history; to that Mediterranean in which French sailors and adventurers—the *Levanti,* so called—were perpetually distinguishing themselves, frequently under the banners of Venice and Malta, in

legendary exploits against the Infidels any systematic chronicle of which would require a specialized volume—episodes such as that of the Chevalier de Fressinet, with one ship, fighting forty-two Turkish galleys; of the Chevalier de La Barre, with two guns, holding off the entire Tripolitan fleet; of Jean Barban, with seventy-eight men, taking on twelve Turkish galleys, succumbing only when fifteen more had been brought out against him.

But some of these episodes, and the historic circumstances that caused them, must be inspected more closely, because they concern the glamorous youth of the Count of Tourville. There was in those days a war in the Levant, the War of Candia, in Crete; a war that lasted from 1645 for twenty-nine years between the Turks and the Venetians, and Venice calling loudly to Christendom for assistance. And Christendom replied, in the persons, primarily, of thousands of French soldiers and sailors; volunteering secretly with Malta and Venice—there was no open war between Turkey and France—in some cases actually deserting the royal service in order to go; like that Chevalier de Valbelle who was to return, as one has seen, to the navy, but who in 1661 was fighting seven Algerian ships, ten Turkish ships at a time, until they called him "one of the best naval men in the world, a tiger."

And another "Christian commander who caused the shores of Turkey to tremble," one of the "firmest supports of Christendom, one of the greatest captains that had been seen for a long time"—he was twenty-five when they said that of him, and he was dead—was Gabriel de Théméricourt; he and his older brother by one year, Maximilien-François, the nephews of a re-

nowned "commander" against the Turks who gave them two ships, Maximilien twenty and Gabriel nineteen, in which to try their luck. And in 1665 Gabriel, with another forty-gun ship, was smashing an Egyptian convoy of twenty-two vessels, capturing six and scattering the others. And in 1668 the two brothers were with their two frigates and two supply ships in an anchorage of the Cyclades, refitting, when the Turkish Capidan Pacha, the dreaded "Tiger," was on top of them with fifty-four galleys, landing three thousand soldiers, attacking the narrow entrance of the harbour. Eighteen galleys at a time to each frigate; but by nightfall those incredible boys had driven the Turks away, and again four days later when they sailed out against them.

And in 1669, when the Théméricourts and some other corsairs—it was piracy of course, if one has to be technical—had attacked another large Egyptian convoy for Candia, capturing the Turkish admiral ship, Maximilien was killed. He was twenty-four. And in 1671 Gabriel and four others were routing the "Tiger" with forty galleys; and in October, after fighting alone with five Tripoli ships, his frigate was damaged and sank, leaving him cast away on the Tripoli coast. They offered him the Koran and command of the Turkish fleet, or death. He refused the Koran, and after torture for fifteen days he refused it again. And they beheaded him, in his twenty-fifth year, exposing his corpse under a notice stating that "the Scourge of the Sea is dead."

And in 1664 two other boys were starting out, with three hundred men in a fine thirty-six gun frigate built specially for them; one of them twenty-four and the

other twenty-two; Honoré de Monchy d'Hocquincourt, son of a Marshal of France, and Captain de Tourville. And in 1665, at Chios, twenty-four Turkish galleys came swooping in to attack them, rowing around the islet at the entrance to take the frigate in rear when she attempted to break through the channel, only to find herself becalmed. It was a terrible affair; d'Hocquincourt on the poop, with cannon balls passing between his legs, covered with blood from a man who had been decapitated at his side; Tourville working the stern guns, fighting off a galley that rammed, until she had to leave her prow in the frigate's stern; a terrific fire from the twenty-four galleys, and after five hours of it ten more galleys on the scene. Thirty-four to one, and the wind came up, and the frigate could fire her broadsides at last, and the Turks ran away. And it seemed incredible.

The Venetian Lieutenants General came in person to felicitate d'Hocquincourt; Louis XIV sent an autograph letter; Tourville's family sent for him to come home—"invincible protector of maritime commerce" and "terror of the Turks," so they hailed him at Venice, while a great many ladies smiled eagerly upon him. But d'Hocquincourt never received the letter. He was twenty-six, and he was dead, drowned with two hundred men on a reef near Crete. Another fine youngster, like Cardinal de Richelieu's nephew, Armand-Jean de Maillé-Brézé, Lieutenant General of galleys at twenty, Lieutenant General of ships at twenty-one, victorious at Cadiz, in 1640 during the Spanish wars, magnificently victorious at Cartagena in 1643, gloriously killed in 1646 at Orbetello, fighting fifty-eight ships against sixty-five. Twenty-seven years old.

Captain de Tourville went home; to see action against the Barbaresques again in the 1670s, and with Abraham Duquesne, then the Barbaresques once more in the 1680s. In 1682 he was Lieutenant General. And the siege of Candia went on, until in 1668, when the Pope called on Christendom, Louis XIV sent a big expedition commanded by his cousin, the Duke of Beaufort, Grand Master of Navigation. And they landed and were annihilated by the Turks. Another Nicopolis. The fleet brought the survivors back, but not the Duke of Beaufort, for he had vanished in the battle; which was well, perhaps, because the King was enraged. And some said that the Duke had not vanished, but was a slave of the Sultan; and some that he secretly lived, imprisoned by the King, wearing an iron mask.

7

In August, 1689, Lieutenant General de Tourville was coming up the Atlantic coast with twenty ships from Toulon.

Earlier in the year, in February, usurping William of Orange and his wife Mary had been proclaimed sovereigns of England, and that lady's father, James II, was a refugee in France; to Louis XIV's way of thinking the only rightful King of England, whom he was determined to see restored to his throne; so that the French war against the English, Dutch, Austrian and Spanish League of Augsbourg was to have for one of its principal objects the gratifying of this ambition. And in March Lieutenant General Gabaret had taken James II over to his faithful Ireland; followed by Lieutenant General de Châteaurenault with an army

which he landed in Bantry Bay; himself followed by the English Admiral Herbert, whose loyalty to Dutch William was extremely lukewarm; so that he retired before the French fleet, avoiding a battle, while Châteaurenault's lieutenants, Gabaret and Forant—old plebeian sea dogs of long service, jealous of their well born and less experienced commander—diddled away their chances of pursuit.

And in August, Lieutenant General de Tourville was approaching Brest with his squadron of twenty, and Admiral Herbert waiting for him with sixty-one English and Dutch. And a ticklish fix for Tourville, but with exceeding skill and cool judgment he outguessed the enemy, made better use of variable winds, and came splendidly into Brest, all secure. It was the talk of the hour, and, as Madame de Sévigné expressed it, "everything shines with joy." They made him Vice Admiral of the Levant, and gave him command of the fleet.

Admiral of the fleet—and one must look at him to see what manner of seaman he was, what manner of admiral he was to be. He was loathed in the navy, his latest promotion resented; because he was known to be the Ministry's pet, the close friend of the Colberts, father and son, and in particular of the son, Minister de Seignelay; because he was reputed to be a politician, a courtier, an opportunist; because he was accused of being a tale bearer to the Marquis de Seignelay, a belittler of colleagues, a disparager of superiors; and no doubt because he was so well favoured, so fortunate, so renowned, so difficult to excel. Because, as Saint Simon recorded, he was "the most skillful constructor, the best carpenter, the most industrious at signals, the finest

pilot, the most resourceful in the face of everything that can happen at sea, the best acquainted with foreign ships, and a man full of resources." In fact "the greatest seaman, on the admission of the English and the Dutch, there had been for a century."

A magnificent seaman who was to influence the whole naval conception of his time, and long after; an unsurpassed deployer of ships in intricate movements—in the light of the new European theory of tactics which one must be aware of in order to appreciate his perfection and the limitations which it inevitably imposed. The days of Ruyter and Duquesne were over, the days of aggressive, unreckoning offensive, and battles to win regardless of risk. A new day was coming—Tourville was the connecting link; still aggressive, still chance taking, still anxious to fight; but increasingly cautious, careful of his entrusted ships, avoiding destruction rather than seeking to destroy, concerned with the mathematical niceties of evolutionary formations—a new day, the day of prudence, and science, and preservation, of indecisive combat preferred to any jeopardizing of ships. The line of battle at all times, at all costs. The rigid, impeccable line of battle. The psychologically timid line of battle. A theory originated in England, fathered by that same James II when he was Duke of York, Lord High Admiral of England and founder, properly speaking, of the English navy.

Such a seaman was Tourville, product and model of his age, and such an admiral he was, consequently, to become; personally courageous to the last possible degree, still capable, occasionally, of remarkable strategical impulses, but professionally more and more prudent

and conservative. A "poltroon as to head but not as to heart," as the Marquis de Seignelay put it.

8

And in June, 1690, Admiral de Tourville was in the Channel with some seventy ships. The English squadrons were napping—the King was in Ireland—Admiral Herbert with twenty ships running up the Channel, collecting them as he fled; for eight days, while the French fleet came after him, against an easterly wind; seeking battle, upbraided by Minister de Seignelay's impatient missives. For if one were so unfortunate as to lose the opportunity of combat, "I do not know how one could explain such a thing to the King." But Admiral de Tourville was not expecting to make any such explanations.

And off Beachy Head, in July—near Pevensey, so that the French called it the battle of Bévéziers—Admiral Herbert finally stood with his fifty-nine English and Dutch, inferior in numbers but perhaps superior in armament. And because Admiral Herbert was still at heart more loyal to James II than to Dutch William, he held back at the centre while his Dutch vanguard attacked with great gusto; finding themselves enveloped when the centre withdrew up the Channel after some four hours of fighting; enveloped, surrounded, twelve of them completely dismasted. But with the turn of the tide the English and Dutch dropped their anchors, with the French drifting, at first, to the westward. There was no wind, and six hours passed, and at nine o'clock in the evening with the flood Admiral de Tourville hoisted pursuit signals, for the allies were running again, "casting . . . their ships ashore and burning

them in sight of the enemy." Eight of them, twelve of them, it may be sixteen of them, and not a French ship in trouble.

Five days of this, straight up the Channel and into the Thames, with the French fleet chasing the English and Dutch; and a panic in London, for "there has scarcely ever been so sad a day in London"—the words are Macaulay's—"as that on which the news of the battle of Beachy Head arrived. The shame was insupportable: the peril was imminent." But the fugitives were safe in the Thames after all; on the first night the pursuit had been slow, scattered, the signals not seen in many cases; and after that Admiral de Tourville had been obliged to wait for his stragglers, and advance in impeccable line of battle; not just in any formation, harrying the panic; that would never have done in that day. And after the English were in the river, there was nothing to do, for the Ministry had given no orders, so that the fleet returned, first to Havre, then to Brest. And what should have been a rout, a disaster, an annihilation following one of the most "complete naval victories ever won," was allowed to dwindle away for the sake of perfection and prudence, those new naval virtues.

And the Marquis de Seignelay was furious; writing to his Admiral that "nothing can make you stay at sea once the impatience to return to port has seized you." Which was absurd and extremely unjust. And in July James II was defeated at the Boyne; and in November the Marquis de Seignelay was lamentably dead; the army faction at once in the saddle, the navy snubbed; at the Ministry of Marine a hopeless incompetent, a sworn enemy of the Colberts, a landlubber, one Louis de

Pontchartrain. So it went, to the despair of sailors, and so frequently during the great reign.

And for the Admiral this Louis de Pontchartrain had some senseless and paradoxical instructions. He was to watch for an allied convoy to the Levant and capture it, but he was to defend the coast; he was to go to sea and stay there, but he was not to risk his ships in battle. Instructions which reveal very clearly the new naval attitude in general—no risks and no "useless" battles; and the new naval policy of the government—fleets to be used as commerce, and not as navy, destroyers. A fine state of affairs that was coming into force. But over his protests the Admiral did it; he had to. He did not capture the convoy which the English were escorting temporarily with one hundred ships—that was to come later, in 1693, when with seventy-one ships he captured and destroyed some eight warships and eighty merchantmen of the Smyrna convoy, with financial damage of millions to the enemy, which was considered as good as, if not better than, a naval victory by the powers above—in 1691 he did not capture the convoy, but with sixty-nine ships he sailed from Brest to play hide and seek with Admiral Russell's eighty-six vessels for fifty-one days.

The "Offshore Cruise" that has never been forgotten; in dangerous waters, in proximity to a superior fleet, sometimes almost in presence; outsailing, outhandling and outguessing his enemy for seven whole weeks without losing a ship—capturing another small convoy, indeed; luring the English away from a Channel in consequence cleared for the activity of countless French privateers; diddling the pursuit at the end with another fine dash into Brest. A remarkable, sustained

exhibition of intricate seamanship, of tactical science, of sheer naval virtuosity. A marine performance, in execution of stringent orders, the perfection and brilliance of which were to serve as a psychologically unfortunate model and standard of behaviour for fleets in that coming era of careful avoidance of decisive conflict.

9

But in 1692 it was all different again. Louis de Pontchartrain was pushed to one side, although still at the Ministry, and François de Bonrepaus, a disciple and assistant of the Colberts, was in charge with a scheme. The fleet was to catch the English squadrons before they united for the season and occupy the Channel, while another expedition was launched to put James II back in England. A matter of intrigues and treacheries; a plot in England against Dutch William; an alleged understanding that the English admirals would not fight—a myth, for while Admiral Russell had stated that he would do nothing to oppose the landing of James II, he had also plainly warned the Jacobites that if the French fleet attacked him he would fight, and "do not think I will let the French triumph over us in our own seas." Not after Beachy Head.

Admiral de Tourville was to sail, with such ships as were ready—in spite of the "classes" there was great difficulty in securing crews—he was to proceed to La Hogue where the army was gathering; and he was to fight any enemy squadron that appeared, disregarding the odds, disregarding all the new concepts of naval strategy and employment. They were extremely abrupt about it at the Ministry, deaf to the Admiral's objec-

tions to these magnificent schemes, unmoved by delays of enlistment and assemblage. The Admiral would sail, he would "avoid" the "accidents" of 1690, it was "not for you to discuss the King's orders," and if he preferred it the King would hand over the fleet to someone "more obedient and less circumspect than you."

Naturally he sailed, in a passionate rage, furiously determined to give the lie to these insulting insinuations. He had only thirty-nine ships—five more were to join him—thirteen fire ships, three thousand odd guns and twenty thousand men; among them, still completely obscure, a pilot named Hervé Riel. And certainly he would fight, if that was what they wanted. Fight anything that came over the horizon, fight until there was not a plank left to float on. And Admiral Russell had sailed with seventy-six ships, picking up others as he came until he had ninety-nine ships, thirty-seven fire ships, some seven thousand guns and forty-two thousand men. And suddenly at La Hogue they were aware of it, and that Admiral Russell meant business, and that Admiral de Tourville was being constrained to a senseless destruction, outnumbered by more than two to one in every department. And now they wanted to call him back; Renau d'Eliçagaray was out in a despatch boat looking for him; but there was storm and fog in the Channel, and when the fleet was found it was too late, for Tourville had already found Russell; on May 29, off Barfleur Point; and the murderous affair had begun.

It was four o'clock in the morning, rough sea and thick weather. Tourville had the wind and advanced against the English centre, his fine, two thousand ton *Soleil Royal* in the lead—one of those "excellent" French ships that Pepys so admired—leaving his van and rear

guards under d'Amfreville and Gabaret to prevent the enemy from encircling him. And now it was nearly eleven o'clock, and not a shot had been fired, for Russell's Dutch vanguard were suspicious, remembering Beachy Head, anticipating an English withdrawal. But then, suddenly, at pistol range, they were at it; Tourville at the centre; d'Amfreville smothering the Dutch; Coëtlogon and Gabaret coming up from the rear guard to support Tourville; Pannetié overlapped by the English rear, spreading himself out; and a gap there into which Shovel's Red squadron of twenty-five ships came pouring in the early afternoon, with a favourable changing wind; and Pannetié very cool, very clever, sailing away to the South, luring Shovel after him.

And all this time at the centre they were pounding each other to pieces; Tourville and Villette-Mursay engaged with six ships against sixteen for five hours; the *Soleil Royal* fighting four three-deckers alone, until Coëtlogon came crashing through to help her; while "the gallant ship," as Macaulay recorded, "surrounded by enemies, lay like a great fortress on the sea . . . so formidably manned that all attempts to board her failed." Fight, regardless of odds—Tourville would show them; and his flagship was a shambles, "with all her scuppers spouting blood." And at four in the afternoon the tide turned; the French anchored while the English drifted out of range, but Shovel, on his side, anchored as well, to keep from being carried into the French. For some hours there was fog, and calm, and men took stock of themselves.

Then at eight o'clock an easterly breeze, favouring Russell, and under a moon the battle was on again, exhausted men driven to the guns by relentless com-

manders. Fire ships coming down; five of them fended off from the *Soleil Royal;* at nine o'clock, Russell withdrawing. Russell incredibly withdrawing. At ten o'clock, in a calm, Shovel's ships cutting their cables, drifting through the French fleet to join Russell, sustaining ghastly damage from enfilading batteries. After a while, the English gone, with five thousand casualties to the French seventeen hundred, one ship blown up and another one sunk, towing their dismasted hulks. Tourville in possession of the field, and, as Admiral Mahan has written, "the extraordinary result was that when the firing ceased at night . . . not a single French ship had struck her colours nor been sunk. No higher proof of military spirit and efficiency could be given by any navy, and Tourville's seamanship and tactical ability contributed largely to the result." Forty-four ships against ninety-nine, and Tourville would not believe it afterwards, insisting that he could not possibly have had more than fifty against him, unable to credit his own achievement.

Well—they had wished him to fight! And he had fought, sublimely, he and his people; and for that day he had won, amazingly; and they made him a Marshal of France for it.

10

But of course there was a sequel, and it was the sequel that was to be remembered and exaggerated. A disaster, they esteemed it, and let it influence their appraisal of the utility of naval effort—and Louis XIV was disgruntled, and found the army more glorious, and washed his hands of the navy, and in that respect it was a disaster—although the loss involved was no greater

than that sustained by the enemy after Beachy Head.

In any case, Tourville had to get home; he was in no condition to invite another engagement; Russell was sure to return, was returning, with additional squadrons. In the night, then, he gave the order to sail, himself with eight ships, to be joined in the morning by Villette-Mursay and d'Amfreville. Others, depending on their scattered battle locations, had headed in different directions; Gabaret towards Brest; Nesmond, far to the eastward, also to Brest—but to get there he was to sail entirely around the British Isles. With Tourville now there were thirty-five ships, and the enemy closely in chase, and the *Admirable,* the *Triomphant* and the glorious *Soleil Royal* in critical shape, so that the Admiral finally transferred to the *Ambitieux;* but he would not abandon his cripples and leave them behind. So they came slowly to the Cape of La Hogue, with the enemy steadily gaining. There was one thing to do, and the Admiral did it. A dangerous thing, at the mercy of swiftly treacherous currents. To pass through the Raz Blanchard, the Alderney Race, and make Saint Malo while the English went the long way around. He had the tide with him; the pilot was sure; but the pilot misjudged it, with thirteen ships still in the Race, obliged to anchor on rocky bottom, dragging their anchors, parting their cables, forced to turn North again.

And at Saint Malo, when d'Amfreville was there with the twenty-two more fortunate vessels—and an English squadron on top of them—the Malouin pilots said it could not be done. Not at low water; they would not undertake to sail these big ships past the shoals and into the Rance river behind Solidor fort.

And it was then, on the deck of the *Formidable,* that the man Hervé Riel stepped forward.

"A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting pilot, he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese."

Hervé Riel, a pilot of Le Croisic, a member of the crew, a Breton seaman. He would take the *Formidable* in, and let the others follow. And he did. And when they asked him what he wanted for having saved the King's ships, it was very simple. He wanted his discharge, so that he might return to Le Croisic and to his wife, whose name appears to have been Aurora, the "Beautiful Aurora."

But in the Race, Tourville and thirteen weary ships going North again. And the three cripples had to be left at Cherbourg—a mere haven at the time—where the pursuing English burned them. At La Hogue two stragglers of Nesmond's; twelve ships, then, and anchor cables lost in the Race, and the men dead from fatigue, and nothing to do but beach them all under the forts. Transports in the little harbour, an army ashore, Bonrepaus, James II, military commanders rushing this way and that. And on June 2 Russell was there, destroying the six ships under Tatihou; having a time of it, on June 3, destroying the six under La Hogue; a furious scramble of small boats; cavalry in the water; Tourville in person fighting like a gamecock, as though he were back at Chios and not fifty years old. While the army looked on, unaccustomed to such amphibian

operations. And the English departed, without touching the transports.

Fifteen ships in flames, the price of Barfleur and ministerial stupidities. A disaster—and yet in the following year Admiral de Tourville was to be out with seventy more, lying in wait at Lagos for that Smyrna convoy. Come to the end of his valorous days, dying in 1701.

11

And out in Canada in these days, a man in his thirties; another fair haired, fine looking fellow, a great strapping mass of a man but quick as a cat, "hardened to the water like a fish"; Pierre d'Iberville, *coureur de bois,* explorer and navigator, soldier and sailor.

The third of ten remarkable sons of Charles Le Moyne, later Baron of Longueuil—the only Canadian title derived from the French Crown that was to survive the English seizure of Canada, transferred by marriage, in 1781, to the direct male descent of an officer in the English army, confirmed in 1880, by Queen Victoria—himself, Charles Le Moyne, the son of an innkeeper of Dieppe, fur trading at Montreal in 1641, acquiring seigneuries at the age of twenty-three, married to a lady of Rouennese extraction. Descended, it might be—this is pure speculation—from the family of that Eustache le Moine, or Le Moyne, of Boulogne, terror of the seas in the days of Philip Augustus.

Ten remarkable Le Moynes—Le Moynes de Maricourt, de Sérigny, de Châteauguay, de Bienville, d'Iberville—celebrated throughout America; three of them Governors, of Montreal, of Guyana, of Louisiana, the latter a Le Moyne de Bienville, the founder of New

Orleans; five of them killed in action, two in service, by the Indians, in Hudson's Bay, on the sea, at Quebec, at Saratoga, one in his seventy-third year, four in their early twenties; an astonishing tribe, of which Pierre d'Iberville was the leader.

Born in 1661, trained in France as a boy in the royal navy; with some of his brothers, performing staggering exploits in 1686 against the English in Hudson's Bay; in 1696, at sea under that Nesmond of Barfleur fame, scourging the English posts in Newfoundland; in 1697, before Fort Nelson in Hudson's Bay, waiting for three of his consorts, caught in his fifty gun *Pelican* by the fifty-two gun *Hampshire*, the thirty gun *Dering* and the armed merchantman *Hudson's Bay*. And a little Barfleur in those frozen waters, the *Pelican* carrying the battle at once to the enemy, for "seeing they were English, I prepared to fight them." A smash at the *Hampshire* to board her, but she dodged it; a crash at the *Dering* and *Hudson's Bay*, passing between them with broadsides; back at the *Hampshire*, keeping the wind on her, firing low at her water line—until suddenly, whether from the effects of his battering or from hitting a rock, she sank with all hands. And the *Dering* in flight, and the *Hudson's Bay* captured.

A pretty engagement, managed in seamanlike fashion, and only one dead in the *Pelican* after three hours and more. But a storm had been rising during the battle, now turning to blizzard and tempest; the *Pelican* damaged by gun fire, the rudder dismantled, the anchor lines parted, the ship on a sand bar, pounding to pieces, her small boats all splintered. But he got his people ashore on rafts, weary and famished, in a bitterness of cold through furious seas; and since there was no food

to be had, these castaways were proposing to march on Fort Nelson—when the three consorts appeared, and between them they captured the fort and a fortune in furs.

And now it was colonizing. Left to themselves the Le Moynes would have made of the North American continent one continuous French dominion from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. And in 1698, to Pierre d'Iberville's way of thinking, the thing to be done was to rediscover the mouth of the Mississippi from the sea. Robert de La Salle, following the river, had come to it in 1682—still looking for a route to China, so that his Canadian seigneury was dubbed "China," *la Chine,* near the site of the present Lachine Rapids. But in 1685, with an expedition from La Rochelle, he had not been able to locate it again; landing too far to the West; losing himself in a tragic overland adventure; murdered, for they detested him, by his men. "There you lie, great Pasha!" But now Pierre d'Iberville was sailing from Brest; spying out Spanish Pensacola, visiting Mobile Bay, searching the shore in small boats for the great Hidden River, recognizing its white turbulence, at last, in March of 1699. Founding a colony at Biloxi, later transferred to Mobile; his brother, de Bienville, returning in 1717 to establish the New Orleans in the King's Louisiana.

But in that day Pierre d'Iberville was dead; in 1706 of the yellow fever at Havana; after his dashing naval conquest of Nevis and Saint Christopher; just as he was preparing to harry the whole English coast of America. A sailor they were later to speak of admiringly as the "Nelson of America."

12

One or two other individual combats in French naval annals that one might well have a glimpse of.

The *Belle Poule*—the "Beautiful Hen"—a frigate of twenty-six guns that started a fashion in head dressing; little models of herself perched on top of towering feminine wigs in the early days of the American War. She was cruising in the Channel, on a June morning of 1778, in advance of two smaller consorts, when an English fleet of twenty ships came in sight ahead. Signalling to her consorts to make themselves scarce, she spread her own canvas; to be overhauled in the late afternoon by the twenty-eight gun frigate *Arethusa,* and the bulk of the enemy four leagues away. She was hailed, and informed that she must report to the English Admiral; to which her commander replied that his course would not take him in that direction; and the battle was on, at pistol range for five hours, in a very slight breeze, with the rest of the squadron slowly approaching. Louis de La Clocheterie in command, of that great Rochellese naval family; wounded during the battle, his second in command killed, his frigate reduced to kindling wood when the *Arethusa* turned tail, abandoning the fight. "I am entirely unrigged," he reported, after bringing the *Belle Poule* to land, "nothing is holding my masts, the frigate's hull, the sails, everything, in a word, is riddled with shots, and I am leaking."

And at Court they were pleased, and gave him a captaincy; to die four years later in his big *Hercule,* under de Grasse at Dominica.

The frigate *Surveillante* of thirty-six guns, Captain

du Couëdic de Kergoualer—a fine Breton mouthful of a name—sailing out of Brest, in October, 1779, with her consort, the *Expédition;* sighting an English sister frigate, the *Quebec,* accompanied by the *Rambler,* some forty miles off Ushant, in a fresh easterly breeze at dawn. At eleven o'clock they were in action; the two consorts at their sideshow; the frigates at pistol range; and a man, Second Pilot Le Mancq, in the *Surveillante's* rigging, dodging a rain of bullets, holding an ensign deployed until the regular ensign staff halliards that had been shot away could be replaced. An hour and a half of it, hammer and tongs, and with a crash the *Surveillante's* masts all went by the board, but over the port side, leaving her fighting side clear of wreckage. Five minutes more of it, and in turn, crash went all three of the *Quebec's* masts, backwards, littering up her decks—and du Couëdic gave the order to board. He had already been twice wounded in the head; now he was hit in the stomach; but he stayed on the quarterdeck, in command; he would not do otherwise, for his first lieutenant was being amputated, his second had lost an eye, the others were dead or severely injured. And now in this hell of destruction another greater peril arose. For just as the French were preparing to board, the *Quebec* burst into flames fore and aft.

She was to windward, right on top of her adversary, sizzlingly close, and du Couëdic had them get out the galley oars, backing away; helped by numbers of English sailors who swam over to the *Surveillante,* while the consorts, their duel abandoned, nosed in to save men who were drowning. But the *Quebec* drifted down, broadside on; catching on the *Surveillante's* bowsprit; setting

fire to jibs; everyone out there hacking away, suspended, projected over an inferno of flame, and smoke, and exploding guns. They got her loose, drifting by to port, still catching in wreckage; terribly close, so that they had to wet down the *Surveillante's* blistering side; all hands at the galley oars, pushing the *Surveillante* forward, now; all hands at the pumps, the wounded brought up on deck, French and English united in one common desperate necessity—quantities of English coming aboard all the time, climbing up ropes thrown out for them—for the *Surveillante* was sinking, riddled with holes at the water line.

And in the midst of it all the *Quebec* blew up, showering the *Surveillante* with burning débris. And the pumps clogged, and fire again, and bucket brigades, everyone helping, inspired and directed by the valiant du Couëdic, still there on the quarterdeck, bloodless and pale with pain. And the fire was out; and they gained on the water; the *Surveillante* was lightened so they could get at the water line holes to repair them. The *Expédition,* her salvaging done, took her in tow, and with fishing boats aiding, dragged her carefully to Brest. And du Couëdic allowed himself to be carried below, tenderly attended by English and French alike. Sailors' hats off to a sailor who had stood by his ship.

And in the harbour of Brest a great fleet was assembled, Spanish and French, seventy ships of the line, and rank upon rank of frigates and corvettes—flags at the mastheads, crews manning the yards, in honour of the *Surveillante* slowly approaching; in honour of Captain du Couëdic when with bareheaded admirals to greet him they took him ashore, still very tenderly, to die.

And one is tempted to go forward one hundred and thirty-eight years to the French destroyer *Bouclier,* on duty off the Belgian coast, on a night in 1917, with the West Diep Channel patrol of four destroyers out of Dunkirk. Lieutenant Bigot on the bridge, with Ensign Peyronnet and bugler Lamarche. Suddenly, the enemy. A German shell scrambles the *Bouclier's* bridge; the binnacle gone; the engine room controls gone; Bigot killed; Lamarche severely injured; Peyronnet terribly wounded. Pitch black, the *Bouclier* furiously engaged, and the helm hard over, the destroyer gone mad, careering in uncontrolled circles.

Lamarche is no navigator or helmsman; simply a sailor bugler; but he knows. Someone must go to the helm. He crawls there and straightens it—feels a hand in the dark. It is Peyronnet, incredibly on his feet, come to take charge as Lamarche loses consciousness. Peyronnet alone on the bridge, in the dark. He is wounded in six places, his head split open, blinded in one eye. Later a wounded sailor joins him, later a wounded ensign from one of the guns. The bridge is smashed, the deck is smashed, a shell has burst in the engine room. But the *Bouclier* is still going fifteen knots, and Peyronnet is still at the helm. After a while the enemy retires; the four French destroyers are returning to Dunkirk. The *Bouclier* has seventeen dead and wounded. The bodies are lined up on deck under tricolor flags when the Admiral comes aboard. Peyronnet receives him at the gangway, held up by two sailors. "I managed to bring back the ship . . ." Peyronnet says, and collapses.

Hats off to a sailor.

13

One comes now to a very great sailor indeed, one of the greatest; a link between Ruyter and Nelson; to Pierre-André de Suffren; and in order to understand him, with his remarkable successes and his magnificent failures, one must again consider the question of the contemporary naval tactics and mentality from which he endlessly suffered. The tactical theories of the eighteenth century.

In 1740, when Suffren was eleven—he was to enter the Marine Guards at fourteen—there had been, by some chance, twenty-five years of peace for France. A period of very necessary economy, at the close of great wars; a period for the navy of skimping, of inactivity, and inevitably, of dry rot; of aging incompetence and junior inexperience; of widening caste hostility between the Great Corps and the outsiders; of increasingly arrogant and independent esprit de corps among "officers in red." And prior to that peace—owing to already existing seventeenth century notions, to the exhaustion and penury of the realm, and to the stupidities of two de Pontchartrain Ministries, Louis the father, and Jerôme the son, "perverse, black, traitor," so called, and "scourge of the navy"—there had not been a real fleet combat since the line of battle bombardment between French and English in 1704. A prudent affair. So that one still went back to Tourville for inspiration; to his Offshore Cruise, to his commercial victory over the Smyrna convoy—Barfleur had been simply a prelude to disaster, of course—as models of naval perfection and utility.

One still went back to his chaplain, Father Hoste,

and his book. "The Art of Naval Armies, or Treatise on Naval Evolutions." Evolutions. Line of battle—the "tyranny of the Order of Battle," as Admiral Mahan has called it in discussion of its effects on the English. The tyranny came to its fullest development in the eighteenth century. Vice Admirals could undertake nothing without orders; a captain might not leave his place in line to go to the assistance of a hard pressed comrade; in the Ordinance of 1765, all initiative was prohibited. The line of battle, solely, and a rigidity of procedure, a mathematical precision of prearranged evolutions. As Admiral d'Estaing was to put it, as long as ships were handled properly, "the dance is outlined" in advance. You could always tell in advance just what would happen—for the English, in the main, fought the same way, the whole business originating with their own James II—unless the wind changed or "some other nautical event" occurred. The "good order of a fleet" required previous disposition of vessels so that "none should ever be free to select what course to pursue." That was Hoste—in a very Colbertine mood.

And no battles. No battles on land—the new Prussian theory, victory without fighting—no battles at sea. Never risk anything. Only too often, according to d'Estaing, the product of naval battles was "much more noise than result." Prudence, precaution, avoidance of general combat. For the American war, "you will do well not to send out big fleets and not to risk decisive battles." Use the navy as a commerce destroyer, as a conqueror of territory. Prizes and islands. Useful purposes; not the mere profitless hammering of enemy squadrons at the risk of your own. So marine endeavour had come to be looked upon. One could always

fight; there was no question of courage involved; Tourville had fought at Barfleur; if one was obliged to, one fought; but it was stupid, and a first rate tactician knew how to avoid it. English and French commanders, with few exceptions, were entirely agreed on the theory, in that century of magnificent naval parades.

14

The state of mind was very completely demonstrated in the celebrated campaign of 1780 conducted in West Indian waters against Admiral Rodney by Admiral de Guichen. Celebrated among contemporaries for its exquisite skill in evolution, for the consummate ability, displayed on both sides, to remain in presence without precipitating any decisive engagement.

Although the guns thundered frequently enough, and there had been some handsome individual encounters; such as those between Squadron Commander Lamothe-Piquet and Admiral "Vinegar" Parker; at the conclusion of which, in the stately manner of those seemly times, the English Admiral was writing to his adversary to assure him that "the conduct of your Excellency . . . fully justifies the reputation which you enjoy among us, and . . . I could not witness without envy the skill you showed . . . Our enmity is transient, depending upon our masters, but your merit has stamped upon my heart the greatest admiration for yourself." But when Rodney and de Guichen came together, the heights of negative, inconclusive warfare were reached, although Rodney was to claim for himself more aggressive intentions than the support of his captains had permitted.

For two months these ancients—Rodney was sixty-

two, de Guichen sixty-seven—took pride, and justly in that day, in navigating in stretches for nights on end in such proximity that "neither officers nor men could be said to sleep"; meeting on three occasions for prolonged exhibitions of processional dexterity—once for some seven hours, another time for fourteen, another for nine —before firing a shot, separating at the end of the campaign with nothing accomplished except the lamentable death of the French Admiral's son.

And in many respects the campaign in 1781 of François Joseph Paul, Marquis de Grasse-Tilly, Comte de Grasse, was a further exemplification of the contemporary mentality, and especially of its materialistic, utilitarian aspects; although he had vigorous impulses of initiative, and was an experienced officer of the highest renown. An extremely fat man, sixty years old, very unpopular.

And in February, Admiral Rodney had seized Saint Eustatia from the Dutch, and loot, pirate loot some of it, to the value of three million pounds—Lamothe-Piquet was later to capture twenty-two ships of the convoy taking it home—remaining at the scene of his conquest until April, involved in financial transactions, many of them personal; sending Admiral Hood to watch off Martinique for the French fleet that was due, but ordering him at the same time to blockade Fort Royal, on the leeward side of the island. So that when de Grasse arrived on the windward side there was nothing to stop him from circling the island, running his convoy into Fort Royal and dispersing Hood after a long range engagement in which "never," the latter believed, "was more powder and shot thrown away in one day before." Dispersing Hood, but not destroying him, not

pursuing him. And now de Grasse was attacking islands—useful pursuits with tangible results, loot for Rodney, territory for de Grasse—failing at Saint Lucia; capturing Tabago before Rodney, finally in motion, could get to him.

And on the way North again—in dangerous waters, to be sure—the two fleets were in presence; Rodney and de Grasse, and avoiding each other, sailing away from each other. And on that day the naval conception of the eighteenth century may be said to have lost the American colonies for England—for de Grasse was soon on his way to Yorktown, to close the trap on Cornwallis for Rochambeau, after playing puss in the corner with the dilatory and completely inadequate Admiral Graves; to have, on the other hand, paved the way for a very sad day, not far distant, for de Grasse—for he had left Rodney and Hood unmolested behind him.

And when he returned to the West Indies, de Grasse was still attacking islands; bagging Nevis, letting Hood slip through his fingers while he captured Saint Christopher; preparing, in 1782, for a descent on Jamaica, promised to Spain by French diplomacy. Running with thirty-three ships into Rodney's thirty-six in the Dominica Channel—Rodney and Hood. And another chance missed, thinking of Jamaica and the preservation of ships, while the English were becalmed under Dominica. And then they smashed him, breaking his confused, hesitating line of battle—for Rodney had his moments. For the better part of a day de Grasse fought his flagship, the *Ville de Paris,* against ten of the English; fought like Tourville at Barfleur; surrendering in the evening with only three able bodied men aboard. But the bulk of the French fleet got away,

for Rodney's pursuit was half hearted, and a great victory for the English was after all only a bad defeat for the French.

The eighteenth century had reasserted itself.

15

In such a century, in 1729 in Provence, Pierre-André de Suffren was born; in such an atmosphere he was trained; placed by his father, in 1743, in the Guards at Toulon, serving aboard the *Solide* in the Mediterranean in his fifteenth year; in such precepts and conceptions he was instructed, receiving precisely the naval education of his contemporaries—except that later on, after 1752, he was not to have any dealings with the new Royal Marine Academy, that great nursery of the sciences, he was not to be in any way associated with the theorists, the mathematicians, the Fleurieus and Bordas, all the intellectual and book learning group. But in other respects there was nothing to differentiate him from any of his comrades; no external influences to guide him into any channel of professional thought other than their own. And yet he was utterly to discard, completely to separate himself from the theories of his time, and by the sole use of his intelligence and instinct to arrive at an entirely contrary tactical conviction and practice.

By the sole use of his intelligence and instinct, developed and aroused in the course of a considerable experience, early in his career, of current tactical methods which apparently opened his eyes, while other men's eyes remained closed, to the fallacies inherent in them. An experience that began immediately in 1744, with the first naval affair of the War of the Austrian

Succession; the so called battle of Toulon, in which English and French lines of battle solemnly bombarded each other with a degree of futility which even the eighteenth century could not stomach, so that the French Admiral was reprimanded—and the English Admiral too; in his case, however, for having presumed momentarily to abandon his strict line of battle. A dull day for an eager midshipman.

Then in 1747 he was in the *Monarque*, one of the rear guard of a squadron of eight ships under Squadron Commander de l'Etenduère, convoying some two hundred and fifty merchantmen, that saw itself overhauled off Cape Finisterre, standing by while the bulk of the convoy escaped, waiting resolutely for fourteen ships of Admiral Hawke's, himself a notable exception to the contemporary run of admirals. And for a bright midshipman, there was something striking which he never forgot in the spectacle of Hawke advancing to attack the French rear with his ships in two lots, one on each side of the French line of battle—something very unorthodox and disastrously effective. Fourteen ships pouring their broadsides into the four of the rear guard, five of them proceeding to engage the four of the van guard, nine of them remaining. Nine to four, and the four in the middle, surrendering after four infernal, incredible hours—and Suffren now a prisoner.

Nine ships moving up to reinforce the five still attacking the van. Fourteen ships now against four, the four still miraculously holding out. But at half past five the *Trident* is done; at seven o'clock the *Terrible* is sinking and strikes—but at midnight, after twelve hours of battle, the flagship *Tonnant* and the *Intrépide* have not yet surrendered; two against fourteen, and the Eng-

lish are through, banged up and exhausted, allowing the *Intrépide* to tow the *Tonnant* into Brest. A victory of numbers and of tactical unorthodoxy—something to remember.

A period of service with Malta after the war—Suffren was to be Bailiff of Malta—and various cruises; then, in 1756, with the outbreak of the fatal Seven Years' War which found the navy completely disorganized, neglected and mismanaged, he was an ensign in the *Orphée,* one of the van guard of a fleet under Admiral de la Galissonnière, awaiting the attack, off Minorca, of Admiral Byng's English—after three days of the customary platonic evolutions. An extremely rigid line of battle combat, the English subjecting themselves because of it to unnecessary conditions of very unequal fire; five of them, including Byng's *Ramillies,* getting themselves into a fearful jam of near collisions; the French failing completely to avail themselves of the enemy's confusion, because to do so would have required abandonment of their own line of battle; failing, in the end, to pursue the retreating English; content with an eighteenth century victory for which the English Admiral was to be courtmartialed and shot. An exasperating day for an intelligent young ensign who remembered Hawke at Finisterre.

And in 1759—Suffren was a lieutenant now, in the *Océan*—he was to see Admiral Boscawen repeat Hawke's tactics, when with a considerably superior force he overwhelmed Squadron Commander La Clue's squadron on its way from the Mediterranean to Brest. A lamentable affair of confused night signals and straying ships; La Clue with only seven ships out of twelve, finally, sustaining a running fight all day

against hopeless odds; the *Centaure* holding up the English attack for four heroic hours; La Clue, with only four ships remaining, the *Océan* among them, running into Lagos, counting on Portuguese neutrality; Boscawen coming right in and destroying the refugees; Suffren a prisoner for the second time. But at least he did not have to be present at the infinitely more lamentable affair of the Cardinals, or Belle Isle, conducted to its disastrous conclusion against Hawke, again—after a night of wild tempest in perilous waters, which saw the two opposing fleets anchored helter skelter, all mixed up together—conducted, if that be the term, by the doddering Marshal de Conflans. A disaster which all France had the spirit to laugh at as "Monsieur de Conflans's Day." And nobody shot for it; but new ships built at once by popular subscription.

16

Some fifteen years passed after the Peace of Paris in varying employments, without noteworthy events, and in 1778, at the time of the French alliance with the American colonies, Pierre-André de Suffren was a captain, assigned with his *Fantasque* to Admiral d'Estaing's fleet for America.

On the throne Louis XVI, for a change, had taken a real interest in the navy; the insufferable Minister de Boynes had been discharged; in his place Gabriel de Sartines had brought personnel and equipment back to a renewed standard of excellence. A Ministry of the sword, however, at the expense of the pen; the separate body of purely administrative officers abolished in 1775; the fighting officers called upon at random to perform unaccustomed and distasteful chores of paper work—

to the detriment, inevitably, of that fundamental work —the "officers in red" dominating the whole structure of the navy; the Great Corps powerful as never before, dominating and domineering; its arrogant spirit of caste and superiority, its conspicuous contempt of professional merchant sailors, its assumption of independence from any control, administrative or ministerial, all reaching a culmination of corporate vanity and intolerance upon which the now not far distant Revolution was to inflict a savage reaction of hatred and revenge.

And in the realm of tactics, for any Maurice de Broglie who might turn up with an intelligent plan of aggressive policy directed against the enemy's naval power, there was a Chief of Staff Fleurieu to insist upon the eighteenth century orthodoxies of prudence and avoidance of battle risk, of concentration of effort upon the destruction of commerce and the acquisition of territory. So that an impatient captain in the *Fantasque,* consumed with the fire of a perception matured by experience into a certainty of conviction completely at variance with the mentality of his day, was to witness again some astonishing futilities of naval procedure, of administrative insufficiency, of executive delays and decorums. Some astonishingly purposeless Franco-Spanish parades in European waters; according to Suffren —he was to write bitter letters about it—some lamentable tactical inhibitions in the d'Estaing campaign in America. And yet it passed for aggressive at home, too aggressive, almost foolhardy; to be superseded by the more reliable prudence of Admiral de Guichen which one has already examined.

And in any case—as an example of what the navy had to suffer, for all these incompetencies were primarily

defects in high authority—the Comte d'Estaing, Vice Admiral of the Seas of Asia, Africa and America, was not a real sailor; he had only been at sea fifteen years; he was a great lord, and he was a soldier of unlimited personal courage, a military commander imposed upon the navy which openly detested him for it, and loathed him for his consequent hostility to the Great Corps, his deliberate favouritism for the "officers in blue." And at New York, where an English fleet could have been had, it seemed to Suffren that d'Estaing was too easily persuaded by local pilots not to attempt Sandy Hook bar; after the seizure of Newport, and a battle prevented by a fearful storm which scattered both fleets, it seemed to Suffren that none of his aggressive suggestions found favour with the Admiral; after the fleet's arrival in the West Indies, and Newport abandoned, it seemed to Suffren that endless opportunities for getting at the enemy squadrons were wasted—he told d'Estaing so—while one fiddled around raiding islands. "Stupidities," Suffren called it, and "I am disgusted as can be with all this."

And in 1779 the capture of Grenada was very fine; d'Estaing fought like a trooper ashore; and an English fleet coming to attack him was everlastingly routed—but Suffren was no less disgusted; four disabled English ships were permitted to escape; the flying English were not molested; because an island was more important, evidently, than a fleet. "If our General," Suffren complained, "was as much a sailor as he is brave, we would not have allowed four dismasted ships to escape." But of course at Versailles the very fact of the rout was alarming; the Admiral had risked ships, he had actually incurred the possibility of a decisive engagement. And

when d'Estaing went to Savannah, to conduct further land operations, leaving English squadrons behind him, Suffren shrugged his shoulders.

They came home, and Suffren was present, in 1780, at the capture, off Cape Saint Vincent, of fifty-five merchantmen from an English convoy of sixty-three for the West Indies. A commercial disaster for the enemy unparalleled since the days of Tourville—but Suffren was profoundly disgruntled. The escort had escaped; three warships had not been captured; and what were merchantmen in any quantity when even a single English ship of the line was available.

There he was, fifty-one years old, always increasingly at odds with his times—and suddenly, in 1781, he was to have his chance, an individual command and a mission.

17

One hardly needs to be told how his professional mind was to function. In preparation a great organizer, a great executive, endlessly attentive to details; a great improviser in necessity, always energetic and resourceful, never at a loss, never discouraged; always receptive to any modern improvement, one of the first to urge the copper lining of bottoms, the use of new types of artillery; like Admiral Courbet, a century later, a great commander, a great inspirer of men—of sailors, that is—always concerned with their welfare, their food, their health, always visiting his sick and his wounded; adored, as was Courbet, by his crews who thought him "the greatest hero upon earth," and "a determined ruffian." A great student of naval history, a reader of books—but not one of the mathematical Academicians—a devotee of

Ruyter. In action a thunderbolt, looking only for battle, planning his main attack in advance, expecting subordinate initiative and gumption, and a fig for evolutions and lines of battle. "Form some sort of line," he once said—and attack. Attack, smash, overwhelm—concentrate on a part of the enemy line, preferably the rear, like Hawke and Boscawen—and destroy. His behaviour in battle, at the close of the eighteenth century, like a cavalry charge after a long procession of snails.

Personally, he was not so simply constructed. And in the midst of many contemporary French estimates—frequently hostile, for, his crews aside, Suffren was cordially hated by most of his associates—one is fortunate to possess one quite intimate English appraisal of him, left by the engaging William Hickey in his memoirs. William Hickey was an official of the East India Company; captured, with Mrs. Hickey, on his way to India by Suffren's squadron in 1782; brought into contact with the French commander at Trincomalee in the course of negotiations looking to his release; an Englishman, critical of the French, his captors and enemies, whenever he had occasion to be. And this is what he had to say about Pierre-André de Suffren.

He found an "extraordinary dress and figure"; in appearance "he looked much more like a little fat, vulgar English butcher than a Frenchman of consequence; in height he was about five feet five inches, very corpulent, scarce any hair upon the crown of his head, the sides and back tolerably thick. Although quite grey he wore neither powder nor pomatum, nor any curl, having a short cue of three or four inches tied with a piece of old spun yarn. He was in . . . a pair of old

shoes, the straps being cut off, blue cloth breeches unbuttoned at the knees, cotton or thread stockings (none of the cleanest) hanging about his legs, no waistcoat or cravat, a coarse linen shirt entirely wet with perspiration, open at the neck, the sleeves being rolled up above his elbows." Such was his customary morning costume; for formal dinner he wore a coat, pulled up his stockings, buttoned his breeches' knees, exchanged the slippers for shoes and encased his neck in a black stock. And ate "voraciously," in spite of the heat. He disliked ceremony of any sort, and when going ashore, "although very corpulent and heavy, he went down the ship's side by a single common rope as quick and light as any midshipmen could have done, without a man at the side." The big, fat, untidy, apoplectic Suffren, but always nimble and agile, always active and on the go, always restless in body and mind.

But he received William Hickey "with the most engaging attention and politeness"; he was at all times "exceedingly affable and pleasing"; and "with all his exterior roughness, the General possessed the insinuating and elegant address of a French man of fashion, and as a proof of attention to the fair sex he had . . . ordered into his jolly boat some papers of chocolate, liqueurs, China sweetmeats and Acheen fruits," which "little articles of real luxury . . . he in person presented to Mrs. Hickey, paying her many handsome compliments at the same time." And at Cuddalore, where arrangements had been made for the Hickeys to proceed to Madras, when they stopped at the French flagship to pay their respects, and Mrs. Hickey unable to get aboard, Suffren got all dressed up and "notwithstanding the ship had considerable motion, rolling

rather deep, he stepped nimbly down her side . . . and was altogether exceedingly gracious and kind." There were also some gifts, a "magnificent present," and when the Hickeys moved off, "to my infinite surprise I saw the *Héros* manned, her crew giving us three hearty cheers."

An interesting light on the personage whom a French pen described as possessing "genius, imagination, a great deal of ardour, a strong ambition, an iron character; he was one of those men whom nature has made proficient in everything . . . Very hard, very bizarre, extremely selfish . . . bad comrade, was loved by no one, but was appreciated, admired by all. He was a man with whom one could not live, and he was especially difficult to command, obeying seldom, criticizing everything."

And much of that, also, was true. He was autocratic, overbearing, arbitrary; he must not be contradicted and he must always have his own way; he was violent in temper, uncontrolled in his speech when aroused, capable of passionate, mortally offensive utterances; he was fearfully ambitious, consumed with desire to be in authority, to attract attention, to achieve glory; desperately concerned with his own promotion, furiously jealous of other good fortunes, working himself into moods of embittered rage when it seemed to him that lesser men—and they were all lesser men—were being preferred to him; he was selfish, and conceited, and unspeakably disagreeable; he was, indeed, impossible to get along with; oppressed by his griefs, bursting with his own worth, storming at everyone with insulting criticism.

And yet they admired him, his captains and officers,

they were obliged to admire him. He was a magnificent sailor; he was a remarkable commander; he was "a consummate hero who reflected the highest honour upon the country he belonged to"; he was—so his English adversary was to tell William Hickey—"as gallant a man as ever lived," a seaman of superlative qualities and talents. They admired him, but with few exceptions—Daniel Savary among them, an officer from the merchant service, trained by Suffren, destined to a long naval career leading to a vice admiralcy without the loss or surrender of any ship ever entrusted to him—with few exceptions they failed utterly to comprehend him. They refused to comprehend him, some of them, because they hated him, and they were unable to comprehend him, his methods, his tactics, his naval temperament, because these were as far removed from their own as the man in the moon. And the more he raved at them, the more he slandered them, intolerant of stupidity and blunder, the less they comprehended him and the less they were willing to try. The snails could not so easily be turned into cavalry chargers. "Form some sort of line," and then ignore it—and to them that was meaningless.

And that was the tragedy. Pierre-André de Suffren, the best sailor, for all his personal faults, that France had ever produced—and they were never to help him properly, never to push his thunderbolts home, never to give him that completeness of victory which his genius had prepared and which his enterprise had deserved. And after all, with the eighteenth century behind them, it was a mistake to have supposed that they would.

18

It began right away, at La Praya in the Portuguese Cape Verde Islands. Suffren, with five warships and a convoy, was on his way to the Cape of Good Hope to forestall an anticipated attack by the English under Commodore Johnstone who had sailed just ahead of him. And at La Praya, where Suffren wished to take water, there was Johnstone at anchor, in a neutral harbour. But Suffren had been at Lagos, another Portuguese "neutral" harbour which had not served to protect La Clue's ships against English Boscawen, and now the tables were turned. And aside from that, there was the enemy; five warships and thirty merchantmen, and no one on watch; a magnificent chance to surprise and destroy. Suffren signalled attack from his *Héros,* and led the *Annibal* and the *Artésien* straight into the bay—expecting the *Vengeur* and the *Sphinx* to follow him, expecting all of his captains to act with initiative, as circumstances might dictate against an anchored enemy caught unawares whom you wished to destroy. Line of battle, he had signalled, because there was no other signal in the code to indicate an intention to fight, but after that of course, in his mind, each ship for herself wherever she could do the most harm.

Straight into the bay, the *Héros,* straight into the crowded anchorage, right into the midst of the astonished English fleet, anchoring alongside of Johnstone's warships with magnificent precision, opening the battle —alone. For the *Annibal* was not ready; she had not called to general quarters; she was following, and she came to anchor near the *Héros* and eventually opened fire; but her captain had never dreamed that Suffren

really meant to *fight;* he was astounded, he had supposed that it was an evolution, and only his courage and loyalty took him to his commander's side—and to his own death—all unprepared and uncomprehending. And the *Artésien* never anchored at all; she attacked a merchantman by mistake, and drifted off with her victim, uncertain of what was expected of her. And the *Vengeur* and the *Sphinx* did nothing whatever, wandering about in the bay, completely at a loss, looking for a line of battle, for some familiar, orthodox procedure, totally unable to function without them. They "forever disgraced themselves," Suffren was to tell William Hickey, but it was his fault, after all, for ever supposing that their minds could respond to his violent innovation.

They fought for two hours, the *Héros* and the *Annibal,* sustaining "a galling fire from the whole of the British line," until "both were so crippled, especially the *Annibal* which was reduced to an ungovernable hulk, having lost all her masts," that Suffren "was under the afflicting necessity of ordering my ships off." And out they went again, through the flabbergasted English fleet, the *Annibal* in tow, and not a move to detain her—later to be entirely remasted *at sea.* And for the rest of the day Suffren waited for Johnstone to attack him outside; but while the English came out they avoided any combat, and at nightfall Suffren went on his way to the Cape—bitterly bemoaning the loss of his "unique opportunity."

Later he was at the Ile de France, attached to Count d'Orves for a campaign in Indian waters; suddenly, in February, 1782, upon the death of his superior, in command of the squadron of twelve ships;

preparing to proceed against—the word, in Suffren's vocabulary, was destroy—to proceed across the Indian Ocean against Admiral Hughes's squadron of nine ships, later on eleven, operating from their local bases of Madras, Bombay and Trincomalee.

19

It is not necessary, perhaps, to follow chronologically every move in Suffren's campaign of 1782 and 1783 against Admiral Hughes. It belongs to naval history and to the admiring analysis of tacticians; summed up in Admiral Mahan's statement concerning Suffren that "he was a great sea captain." A campaign of sixteen months, in which by his vigour and resourcefulness, backed by the splendid enthusiasm of his devoted crews, in battle after battle, Suffren kept his adversary perpetually on the defensive until the peace. But to Suffren it was a failure. He never destroyed his enemy. He was never able to ram it into the heads of his captains what it was that he wanted them to do. He was never to be properly supported. He was, at times, to be deliberately betrayed, abandoned, disobeyed, obstructed; because they hated him, and his manners, and his methods; because they were mentally unable to grasp his meaning and procedure—however much they might admire his courage and ardour—because to so many of them, when he was not a boor, he was a maniac.

At Sadras, in February, they muffed his attack, and Hughes got away to Madras after a pounding. At Negapatam, in July, in the course of a furious two-hour battle terminated by a storm, one of his captains surrendered without sufficient justification; three more

had to be sent back to the Ile de France—Suffren called them "villains," and the fleet labelled them "poltroons"—one of them having "behaved in the most dastardly manner so that his own officers and crew cried out shame"; in London, later, Edmond Genet was reporting to the French government that "people insist that Mr. de Suffren would have obliged Admiral Hughes to surrender with a part of his squadron if three vessels had not abandoned [him] at the hottest moment and forced . . . that gallant general to fire with one broadside on those who were deserting him and with the other on the enemy." Spite on their part, primarily; the sequel to a revolt of the officers against Suffren for his failure to obey instructions received in April, ordering him back to the Ile de France. But Suffren would not obey; he detested the island; he was serving "to make war, and not to make love to the women of the Ile de France"; and when they had said of him that "since he always wants to be fighting, let him fight alone," Suffren had retorted that "I command alone."

That was shortly after the battle of Provédien Rock, off the northern extremity of Ceylon, in which some of Suffren's captains had again disappointed him. He had ordered an attack at pistol range in two divisions—Nelson's approach at Trafalgar—while the *Bizarre* was to turn the English line and engage it ship by ship on the further side. But they did not understand; they held back at the wings; only a part of the French attack came promptly to close quarters. The *Sphinx* dismasting the English *Monmouth;* Suffren in the *Héros* on top of her too; the *Orient* and the *Brilliant* smashing up Hughes's *Superb;* in one of the

most murderous affairs in history. All of them anchored together that night among the reefs, during a fearful storm; watching each other afterwards for a week; Suffren short of powder, Hughes on the defensive; separating, finally, without further combat.

Suffren had been greatly handicapped by the lack of a base. After Negapatam he had been obliged to make repairs on the coast; felling trees and improvising forges and rope walks. Now, in August, he boldly attacked Trincomalee and took it. He had fourteen ships with him; in September, Hughes was there with twelve to challenge him. But as usual Suffren's attack went wrong; the captains held back, they did not understand, some of them did not want to understand. For a while only two ships followed him, and the *Héros,* the *Illustre* and the *Ajax* took the brunt of the concentrated English bombardment; reduced to hulks, the *Héros* and the *Illustre,* dismasted and crushed; the *Héros's* white royal ensign shot away at one moment, and Suffren running up and down like a madman, fearing that the English would think that he had surrendered, yelling for "White ensigns; White ensigns! Dress my ship with white ensigns!"

And Hughes was deeply impressed, relating to William Hickey how "after fighting . . . in a manner bordering upon desperation and performing wonders, the superior fire of the *Superb* and *Sultan* completely silenced . . . the *Héros*. . . . Her upper deck was more than once completely cleared, scarce a man remaining upon it except Mr. Suffren himself, who ran up and down the quarterdeck like a lunatic, crying out most earnestly for some fortunate shot to take him off." Hughes afterwards "never thought of the scene but

with astonishment, and how the *Héros* sustained such a tremendously galling fire is still incomprehensible to me." His own *Superb's* cabin was "an absolute cullender, being perforated in every direction by cannon balls"; all of his ships were "sadly shattered," the rigging "almost totally destroyed," and the "slaughter in both fleets was dreadful."

And in the midst of it there was explosion and fire aboard the *Superb,* "a truly awful and terrific misfortune," under cover of which "the *Annibal* . . . came down in the most resolute and determined manner"—there were some loyal captains—"running in between the *Sultan* and *Héros,* whereby he clearly preserved his Admiral's ship." And again at nightfall the two fleets, "as if by agreement, let go their anchors higgledy-piggledy, a Frenchman and an Englishman close together, and thus they remained not only the whole of that night but all the next day, mutually repairing their damage, in the evening getting up their anchors and separating." It was, "in fact," a drawn battle—and Suffren was furious. It was, he wrote, the result of "the most shameful desertion that has ever been seen"; his officers were against him; "I am alone: no one who can help me."

So for the good of their souls he took them on cruise in the monsoon season, capturing hundreds of merchantmen which he burned in sight of Madras, while Hughes sat in Bombay; and in June, 1783, with fifteen ships he was at Cuddalore, or Gondelour, which Hughes was blockading with a squadron of eighteen. But Suffren slipped inshore, took on men and munitions, and went out to fight. There was a new regulation lately, requiring commanders to board a frigate during an en-

gagement and keep out of direct action, the better to control the battle. And Suffren obeyed; he boarded a frigate—and put her in the line of battle. For it was a regular line of battle affair, this time, "most sanguinary," and, with all the orthodox proprieties observed, Suffren's captains were at home and contented. Hughes was driven away, Gondelour was relieved—and eight days later there was peace. And Suffren was mollified. His cruise after Trincomalee, winding up with Gondelour, was, he thought, "far above everything that has been done in the navy since I have been in it." And at Cape Town, in December, he was flattered and pleased by "the esteem and consideration which the English here have testified for me."

He came home; Lieutenant General after Trincomalee; now Vice Admiral; a very great popular hero; in 1788 in command of the fleet. And a few months later he was dead, of the gout—although it was whispered that he had died in a duel, sprung from his dismissal of captains in India.

Admiral Satan, as the natives had called him; whom the English had dreaded "more than the plague."

20

The Revolution came, and with it the utter temporary demoralization and disintegration of the old navy—substituting for it a madhouse of "patriot" incompetence, of executive inexperience, of legislative ignorance and folly—which, in the contemplation of this astonishing period, can produce only a sense of incredulous admiration for whatever naval effort was actually achieved, under conditions such as to have

justified the complete abandonment of any marine enterprise.

The old navy had itself to blame, of course. In the past, the Great Corps, the spirit of clique, the arrogance towards the plebeian—the merchantman, the common sailor, the arsenal worker—the caste aloofness; now, in the face of fundamental national movements, the continued aloofness, the assumption of an independent, superior existence apart from the life of the nation, the refusal, in 1790, to accept the tri-colour flag. Then a gradual diminution of arrogance; soon a desperate play of affability, of "patriot" enthusiasm, of hail fellowship with the crews, with the port populations—but it was too late. The officers were "suspect"; the resentments and hatreds of generations were released, with a clamour of demagogues and a violence of rabbles, and the old navy was doomed.

Riots at Toulon, already in 1789; riots at Brest, five months of riots; mutinies at sea—astounding mutinies, such as that of the French West Indies fleet in the harbour of New York, in 1793, which Edmond Genet put an end to—more riots at Toulon; pitched battle, in 1791, between the republican Whites and the royalist Blacks; massacres in the streets, in 1792—and commanding officers strung up to lamp posts—Toulon, still royalist, giving itself up for a while to the English, in 1793—and the entire Atlantic fleet in mutiny upon receipt of the news.

And at Paris, in the Constituent Assembly, later in the National Convention, some remarkable decrees. The "National Marine"—something like the "national guard" in conception—and no difference any longer between the merchant marine and the navy; one type

on a par with the other—Equality and Fraternity—and service for officers indiscriminately in either. Citizen officers. No more naval training schools—nurseries of caste. The Marine Corps abolished, naturally—the "officers in blue" very much in the saddle now—and a mere four years' experience of plain navigation sufficient to claim examination for a commission to command ships, merchant or naval. All administrative work and the management of arsenals in the hands of civilians, and their deliberations public. Later on, the Representatives on Mission, dreaded dictators, omnipotent envoys of the civilian government.

Some remarkable results, inevitably. Politicians from the "Clubs" very much to the fore; committees of crews discussing policy and strategy, passing on the "civic virtue" of commanders, sitting in judgment on the "patriotism" of officers who did not continuously rush forth against the enemy, all in a welter of insubordination and "democratic" insanity; among the newly created officers, monumental incapacities in a chaos of inexperience, so that men of any genuine ability preferred to serve in the armies. Some remarkable careers—Villaret-Joyeuse a lieutenant in 1789, Citizen Admiral in 1794. A wholesale emigration under way of old régime officers; desertions, if one will, by the hundreds, taking the élite of the navy out of the country to serve against France, on behalf of the royal cause, in the foreign navies at war with the Republic.

Then the Terror, weeding out the remnants of the system; former nobles expelled; the navy "purified"; vacancies filled by the Citizen Minister, selecting from a list containing three times the number of names necessary, drawn up by the eligible officers themselves—

ingenuous folly—accusations and denunciations in order; the Jacobin persecution filling the prisons, sending good men to the scaffold. Among them, in a batch of some thirty condemned containing the greatest names in France, that Admiral d'Estaing whom the old navy had once detested for his plebeian sympathies, his "blue" leanings.

Incompetence, inexperience, insubordination, insanity, a scarcity of men and a collapse of materiel; upheaval, deterioration, demoralization, desertion and terror—that was the navy, in the Year II of the Republic, One and Indivisible.

21

And the most remarkable thing about this navy is that it went out; it manned ships and took them to sea; it kept them at sea, in 1793, for six months at a time—twenty-six ships cruising off Brittany with Citizen Admiral Morard de Galle, until the news of Toulon's defection drove them to mutiny; it faced the enemy with its only valid asset, a willingness to perish; and it fought incredible battles.

France was at war, at war with all Europe and England; at war with herself, in 1793, with Bordeaux, with Toulon, with Marseille, with the Vendée, with Normandy; France was at the last gasp of her life, destitute and starving—literally famished—but Danton's remarkable citizen armies were tramping out to the frontiers, writing Valmy, and Jemappes, and Wattignies into history; and the citizen navy must not remain idle. It must take its neglected, dilapidated ships, and its forlorn, seasick, starving, landlubber crews, and go out. There had been some improvement.

At Brest, in the spring of 1794, there were no supplies, and there were not enough real seamen left to go around, but at least there was order and discipline, and the fear of God in men's souls, after Jean Bon Saint-André had passed that way. An end to clamour and rabble. In effect Citizen Minister, in fact Representative on Mission and member of the Committee of Public Safety, that one time Protestant pastor and merchantman mate had brought his own Terror for eight months to mutinous Brest, striking high, striking low, sending all ranks to the scaffold, leaving the port pale and silent with the dread of his name, restored to its naval self-respect by the fearful efficiency of his cleansing brutality.

And now, in May, 1794, all France was awaiting a convoy of one hundred and fifty ships with food supplies from America—some of Edmond Genet's ships—and those ships *must* get in, through Admiral Howe's blockading squadrons. "It is not a victory that we need, but our convoy," Citizen Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse was told when he was given command of the fleet. He had shown promise as a youngster in the American War, and Suffren had thought well of him. He must maintain a "proud and imposing countenance" and keep the enemy off until the convoy was safe. He sailed from Brest with twenty-six ships—Admiral Howe's own squadron consisted of twenty-five, while twelve more were off Ushant watching for the convoy—and with the Citizen Admiral, in the *Montagne,* went Citizen Representative Saint-André—a Carnot, a Saint-Just of the fleet.

And on May 27, on 8 *Prairial,* the two squadrons met, Villaret-Joyeuse enticing Howe to the North; a

heavy rear guard action, with the *Révolutionnaire* doing nicely against several English. On the next day, general action, and many of the Citizen Captains for the first time in their lives in squadron formation—one must see them on their quarterdecks, throughout this affair, helplessly unaccustomed, everlastingly willing to try—and some dreadful confusion in the handling of ships, but the *Indomptable* and the *Tyrannicide* put up a good fight against the English attack; and then for several days there was fog. On June 1, in clear weather, the squadrons were again in presence; the English to windward; Howe in his sixty-eighth year, twisted with rheumatism, sitting on deck in an armchair aboard his *Queen Charlotte.*

The engagement began in great clouds of smoke; the English breaking through the French line almost at once, astern of the *Montagne,* raking her mercilessly, smothering the French rear; the *Montagne* and the *Jemappes* coming about, plunging immediately into the obscurity of the battle; the rest of the van guard lost in the smoke, drifting away. And in the murk of that tragic combat—one cannot follow them all, but the *Vengeur du Peuple,* for instance. The *Vengeur* engaged with two ships, one a three-decker, when the *Brunswick* comes looming up, catching the *Vengeur,* trying to board her, with her anchor holding the *Vengeur* fast so that she can no longer fire her guns on that side, but the English guns, differently mounted, are still in action; the pair holding there for two hours, while the *Vengeur* drives off two other ships—another three-decker—on the other side; the *Brunswick* breaking away, at last, the *Vengeur's* entire crew at the pumps when the three-decker returns and dismasts her.

The *Vengeur* sinking as the battle drifts off. The *Trente et Un Mai* trying to tow her, driven off when the battle drifts back. The *Vengeur* sinking, sinking fast; calling for help; her flags at half mast; small boats from the English ships doing their best with survivors. The *Vengeur* going down, with more than half of her crew. And one would not care ever to disturb the cherished tradition of that last *Marseillaise* that they sang.

The *Jemappes*. In action in every direction, fighting a seventy-four on one side when another comes up on the other. The *Jemappes* dismasted at the end of an hour, heeling over terribly, while the crew close the ports and hack away at the wreckage, with the seventy-four on that side on fire. A three-decker across the stern to ask if the *Jemappes* has struck; a Citizen Quartermaster up the rigging where the ensign hangs limp to display it; the Citizen Captain's compliments to the three-decker, and the *Jemappes* has not struck. But the *Jemappes* is perfectly helpless while the three-decker rakes her at will—until the English commander is hit by a musket shot, and the *Montagne* comes thundering in. The *Montagne* has been fighting seven English ships at once; she has three hundred holes in her hull; she has lost eighteen officers and several hundred men. Now she ranges alongside the battered *Jemappes* for a moment—she must go off through the smoke to rally the van guard—and as they pass, the Citizen Admiral and the Citizen Representative bare their heads to a glorious hulk. The crews cheer each other, and the battle drifts on.

They were not lacking in dignity, these citizens. If they did not know how to govern their ships, they knew

how to fight them, and they challenged death with decorum.

And they saved the *Jemappes.* The *Montagne* had gone off on that first afternoon to round up the van guard, to leeward. On the battlefield, now silent and scattered, the *Jemappes,* as night fell, had all her men at the pumps, her holds full of water. At dawn, on June 2, there was a heavy fog; not a sound; not a sign of what might be taking place. When the sun broke through, the *Jemappes* found herself one of a score of French and English ships, dismasted and derelict; in the distance the remainders of the two squadrons were still in presence. But the French were to leeward; the Citizen Admiral had only thirteen ships in commission, and he must think first of the convoy. The day passed, while the derelicts waited; five of them, including the *Jemappes,* to be finally towed back to the squadron; six of them of necessity abandoned. And painfully these not inglorious survivors—there were five thousand French dead—set their course towards Brest, while the English refrained from pursuit. The Glorious First of June, they were to call it—but in England, privately, it was difficult to understand why any part of the French squadron had been allowed to escape, or why Howe was back at Portsmouth on June 13—and glorious it was, for the *Vengeur,* for the *Jemappes* and the *Montagne,* for all those citizen sailors.

And the convoy got in. That was the chief, the only purpose of the Citizen Admiral's sortie, and it was achieved. For on his way back towards Brest, on June 10, off Ushant, there was the other English squadron in sight—retiring before Villaret-Joyeuse, not realizing his precarious state; and on June 14 the

convoy was in. A stroke of fortune, a matter of a few days either way; but the battle of Finisterre had sent Howe back to his base, and the gods had helped those who had valiantly tried to help themselves. And at the National Convention they decreed that the "naval army" had "merited well of the country."

And because it had merited well of the country, the citizen navy must not remain idle. It was accumulating inevitable disasters, foregone tragedies, but it must continue to go out, it must keep the flag at sea. In the case of Villaret-Joyeuse, the idea occurred to a senseless National Convention in December. He must go out in December, into a midwinter Brittany ocean, and cruise for no earthly purpose off that murderous Brittany coast—with his wretched crews, without adequate supplies, in his floating death traps, already falling apart from lack, in the general national penury, of proper repairs and materials. Thirty-two ships ordered out by an assemblage of idiots at Paris, for that "Great Winter Cruise" which has remained a ghastly legend in the navy.

And no doubt the National Convention was astonished when on the very first day, on Christmas Eve, 1794, the *Républicain* struck a rock and was lost; when for thirty-four days the fleet was disbanded and shattered by a furious tempest; when ship after ship opened up, the *Neuf Thermidor*, the *Scipion*, the *Superbe* gone to the bottom like sieves, the *Neptune* ashore, the *Téméraire* barely nursed into Saint Malo, the *Fougueux* into Groix; the rest of the fleet back at Brest, on February 2, 1795, some of them with seven feet of water in the holds.

The climax of the navy's sufferings at the hands of the Revolutionary folly.

22

The Revolution passed, the chaos of that irresponsible period of civic and social—but not military—exhaustion and collapse known as the Directoire came to replace it. At the head of the alleged government, that Barras, who had once served under Suffren—and lied about him.

And with the passing of the Revolution, a strong reaction against its methods and innovations, a tremendous swing back to the past. Vice Admiral Truguet, of high naval descent, a republican but a member of the old navy, a great upholder of the sword against the pen, at the Ministry; emigrated officers reappearing on every side; the old "officers in red," men like Brueys and Villeneuve, welcomed and put in command; the young incompetents of the revolutionary system cleaned out, the few new men that remained immediately copying the mentality and manners of their restored predecessors. A conviction, very soon, that there had never been anything better than the old royal navy of 1789; a return to its principles and procedures; a renewed appreciation and imitation of the traditions, the leaders of the past; a revival, very quickly, of the old solidarity, the old spirit of caste and aloofness. So little, fundamentally, had the Revolution really made itself felt.

At the same time, in the midst of everlasting wars that were only beginning, draining the country of men, of an incredible national misery and bankruptcy, a continuing lack of supplies, of materials, of ships, of

repairs, of instruction, of experienced subordinates, of trained crews. A navy spiritually resuscitated; but physically incapable of adequate action, some of its ships destined to break in two from the shock of their own artillery; tactically always imbued with all the old line of battle rigidities, the defensive precautions, the utilitarian conceptions of the eighteenth century. So little, fundamentally, had the revolutionary Suffren made himself felt.

It was this navy that Bonaparte took, in 1798, to the almost inevitable disaster of Aboukir, in Egypt; with this navy, still dilapidated and untrained—for the Emperor had been too busy with his expensive, and very glorious, armies—oppressed with the sense of its own deterioration and inactivity, that Napoleon proposed, in 1805, to effect his invasion of England. And what with one imperial plan and another—the Emperor had his whims, and ships were to him only so many military units—Admiral Villeneuve had been for five months at sea, parading back and forth across the Atlantic, when in September—with eighteen ships in very poor condition, manned by sick, dejected crews—he found himself at Cadiz, in the company of thirteen allied Spanish, which was perhaps no very great consolation. Outside, the English squadrons were gathering, commanded by a certain Admiral Nelson whom Villeneuve had seen in action at Aboukir.

And while at Cadiz they understood themselves to be in no condition, physically or mentally, to meet the enemy in pitched battle—in spite of an apparent superiority due to numbers—at Paris the Emperor, who understood nothing of naval matters, was storming impatiently up and down, ordering the fleet to go out,

berating Villeneuve as a coward and traitor, sending him peremptory, insulting instructions, sending a successor, indeed, to take his place. It was a good deal like the case of Tourville before Barfleur, subjected to the government's sarcasm. And where Tourville had had the fumble of Beachy Head on his conscience, Villeneuve's prudence with the rear guard at Aboukir had been a subject of comment. And with bitter irony in his heart he wrote back to Minister Decrès that "if the only things the navy lacks are character and boldness, I think that I can assure Your Excellency that the present task will be crowned with a brilliant success." And in much the same spirit as Tourville's, in the same enraged frame of mind—knowing that his successor was on the way—Villeneuve seized on the least unfavourable moment, when Nelson's fleet was temporarily reduced to twenty-seven ships, and went out, on October 20, with his thirty-three Spanish and French. Knowing exactly what was in store.

This is not the place in which to provide yet another detailed account of the battle of Trafalgar. It was one of the decisive naval battles of history, and its events have been amply set forth in more capable volumes. What needs to be remembered, perhaps, is the physical condition of the French fleet that fought in that battle; a condition inherited from the catastrophe of the Revolution and Directoire; the wise unwillingness of its Admiral to fight at all under those conditions, and his compulsion to do so under the sting of the Emperor's petulant criticisms; his clear realization of the hopelessness of his endeavour.

Villeneuve was intelligent, he possessed a considerable genius; he had no doubt heard of Ruyter and

Suffren; he exposed and announced to his captains before the battle precisely the eventual plan of Nelson's attack—a Suffren attack—in separate columns seeking to break the French line and smother the rear; while Nelson was telling his people that they would not be doing wrong as long as they had their ships alongside the enemy, Villeneuve was saying that any captain not within gunfire would not be doing his duty; but he was facing an eighteenth century attitude similar to that which had ruined Suffren, and he was also writing that "we have an antiquated naval tactic, we know nothing except to put ourselves in line . . . I have neither the means, nor the time, nor the opportunity to adopt [other tactics] with the captains to whom the [French and Spanish] ships are entrusted. . . . I think that they will all stick to their posts, but not one of them would be capable of taking a bold decision." But one of them did; Captain Lucas in the *Redoutable,* who of his own accord placed his ship in a gap that occurred in the line.

In such a mood, with such ships and such commanders, Admiral Villeneuve went out to fight Trafalgar.

23

Except for the prudent van guard, ten ships delaying in the distance—and a court-martial absolved them, if not public opinion, for the allied line was six kilometres long, and they were becalmed—when it came to actual combat they fought like cats, as usual.

The *Fougueux* against the *Mars* and the *Belle Isle,* boarded and taken after two hours by the *Temeraire,* with only one hundred and seventy-eight men standing

out of seven hundred. The *Intrépide* against seven ships, sinking under his feet before her captain would agree to surrender. The *Redoutable* grappled with the *Victory*—that memorable engagement—then the *Redoutable* against the *Victory,* the *Temeraire* and the *Neptune;* the *Redoutable* sinking, striking with one hundred and twenty-three men left out of six hundred odd. Villeneuve's *Bucentaure* against the *Neptune* and the *Conqueror;* against four or five others; Villeneuve surrendering after four hours when he was not able to find any small boat remaining to take him from his shattered flagship to some other vessel. Over three thousand French dead; and on the quarterdecks half of the allied captains killed or wounded, Admiral Magon killed, two Spanish Admirals dying, Admiral Nelson dead.

A disastrous business, and, as Villeneuve wrote afterwards, "so much courage and devotion deserved a better fate." A more smiling fortune, such as was vouchsafed, at this same time, to Squadron Commander Allemand; lost with five ships in the shuffle of the Emperor's confused fleet movements; finding no one at his various rendezvous; cruising successfully, taking prizes—and no news to him or from him—for one hundred and sixty-one days. The "Invisible Squadron."

Trafalgar—and a fearful time after the battle; a storm overwhelming all those battered, waterlogged ships filled with wounded and dying; the *Redoutable,* the *Santissima-Trinidad* and others, sinking during the night; the *Intrépide* burned by the English; the *Algeciras,* the *Aigle* and the *Bucentaure* actually recapturêd by their prisoner crews, but only the *Algeciras* could be saved; a sortie from Cadiz the next day, and the

Neptune and the *Santa-Anna* retaken; only one French and three Spanish prizes finally brought in to Gibraltar out of the lot. The rest recaptured, or gone to the bottom, or piled up on the rocks.

A tragic aftermath; and still another, in 1806. Villeneuve, alone, in an inn at Rennes—he had been treated with great consideration in England; allowed to return to France to justify his conduct of the battle; but Napoleon would not receive him; his old friend, Minister Decrès, would not reply to his letter—Villeneuve, alone, stabbing himself to death.

24

Villeneuve was gone; the navy continued in a vicious circle of inexperience and resultant incapacity; but still there were some great names to inscribe upon the record of those difficult years.

Léonard Motard, for instance, of Honfleur; a fine, quiet type of fighting commander, of accomplished seaman. The son of François Motard, a ship's boy at the age of eight, in 1741, received in the navy as a common sailor in 1755, captain of his ship in 1792; himself the son, grandson and great-grandson of long distance captains, serving continuously in the merchant marine during the intervals of peace. Captured after four boardings in the little *Jeanne Gentille,* with six men and fifteen guns, by a Barbary corsair carrying a crew of three hundred—fifty to one odds, and it took them four tries, and Motard all hacked to pieces with wounds —presented to the Sultan of Morocco and offered a command if he would abjure, which he would not; kept a slave for three years until redeemed with other captives by a royal embassy, in 1767. Sailing to India in

the 1770s; in 1780 building the *Stanislas* for the Indian trade, one of the finest vessels ever seen in the French merchant service; attacked by the English frigate *Apollo,* driving her off after a furious engagement, getting his own dismasted vessel safely into Ostend; and a commission and a sword of honour from Louis XVI.

A link in one of those seafaring Honfleur families—retiring, often quite obscure families that have always abounded in the seaports of France—and the son, Léonard, was to surpass him. A career in the navy, beginning in 1786, at the age of fifteen; ensign in his father's ship, in 1793; "frigate captain," in 1798, in the *Orient,* the flagship of Admiral Brueys which took Bonaparte to Egypt. Present, consequently, at the *Orient's* last fight, at Aboukir, against the *Bellerophon,* the *Alexander* and the *Swiftsure*—later, after Brueys had been cut in two by a cannon ball on his quarter-deck, against five English ships, and the *Orient* on fire; the *Orient* abandoned, Motard, already wounded, swimming to a neighbouring English vessel; the *Orient* blowing up, and the famous Casabianca and his ten-year-old son still aboard; the boy who "stood on the burning deck whence all but him had" *not* "fled," incidentally. Then, in 1802, Motard in command of the frigate *Sémillante,* cruising and raiding in her for six years, sustaining several very brilliant combats, and in particular his victorious anchored battle, in 1806, against the *Sceptre* seventy-four and the fifty gun *Cornwallis.* Colonel Major, finally, of the Sailors of the Imperial Guard, and Honorary Rear Admiral in 1814.

Victor Duperré, of La Rochelle—another great

name; a big, healthy, active, silent seaman, a little hot headed. The twenty-second child of his parents; a ship's boy at sixteen in the merchant service, in 1786; possessed of such an aptitude for the sea that two years later his captain was pronouncing him fit to command a ship, declaring that "there, is a real sailor." Gone into the navy in 1792, steadily rising, never losing a ship in his entire career; a rear admiral at thirty-six, a vice admiral at fifty-five, in 1830, when he commanded the fleet which presided at the taking of Algiers; a full admiral after that, and three times Minister of Marine—and a son growing up who was himself to be a vice admiral.

Emmanuel Hamelin—Honfleur again, and another old seafaring family—whom one has already seen with Nicolas Baudin's scientific expedition, in 1800. In the merchant service in his teens, an instructor of navigation at twenty, in the navy in 1792; with Citizen Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse in the *Montagne* at the battle of Finisterre; in 1797 assigned to coast patrol and convoy duty, an obscure, thankless task which he performed for three years with admirable energy and a constant attention to discipline. Then with Baudin; then back to his convoying, in 1805, from Havre to Boulogne through the English squadrons; in command at Havre for a while, in an arduous period which once kept him for twenty-nine days without going to bed. In 1806 in command of the twenty-eight gun frigate *Venus,* making two fine dashes out of Havre and Cherbourg through the blockade; cruising with various ships in the Indian Ocean, in 1809, taking numberless prizes; in 1810 taking the forty gun *Ceylon,* carrying some four hundred soldiers and a general's staff; then him-

self immediately attacked by three English ships, fighting his previously damaged *Venus* against them for three hours before he surrendered. Rear Admiral for that, in charge of the Brittany Squadron, in 1813; a fiend for discipline and drill, "Teaser" to his men who adored him. Major General at Toulon, in 1818; commanding the blockade at Cadiz, in 1823, when an English frigate slipped through and he resigned, in the face of governmental tantrums.

But the name did not pass from the navy, for a nephew was to command the Black Sea Squadron in the Crimean War, and become Admiral and Minister of Marine.

25

And in 1810, Victor Duperré and Emmanuel Hamelin were both cruising in the Indian Ocean, using as a base the Ile de France, one of the Mascarene Islands—eventually Mauritius—where General Decaen with only some four thousand soldiers, and nothing coming from France, could not help but see a fatal day approaching.

And in July the English were there in force, seizing Bourbon Island, in August the little islet and fort of La Passe commanding the entrance to Grand Port, on France Island. And on August 20 the Duperré squadron—the frigates *Bellone* and *Minerve,* and a prize, another *Ceylon*—boiling in from a spell at sea, saw the French flag flying as usual over the fort of La Passe, and on a frigate anchored nearby. They held their course for the anchorage of Grand Port—when with a sudden booming of guns the frigate took down her French flag, the fort followed suit, and in-

stead it was the English at La Passe, and the frigate was their *Nereid*. She was joined, on August 22, by the frigates *Sirius*, *Iphigenia* and *Magician;* on August 23 all four of them advanced into the harbour to attack Duperré's anchored ships.

It was a roadstead of shoals and reefs, and the *Nereid* went safely in, anchoring within pistol range, the *Iphigenia* stopping half way, but the *Sirius* and the *Magician* ran fast on a reef, facing Duperré's *Bellone* and the *Minerve*. And almost immediately, with the opening shots of the battle, the anchor lines of the *Minerve* and the *Ceylon* were severed, so that they drifted aground, the *Minerve* in such a position as to be partly masked by the *Bellone,* unable to fire efficiently; leaving the *Bellone* and the stranded *Ceylon* to receive the brunt of the English bombardment; returning it with interest, so that soon the *Nereid* was done. The anchored *Bellone* and the stranded *Ceylon* now against the anchored *Iphigenia* and the stranded *Sirius* and *Magician*, the latter in a rather disadvantageous position. And all at once a parting shot from the *Nereid* again, and Duperré was wounded. They thought at first that he was dead, and sent for Captain Bouvet of the *Minerve*—another great name, an admiral to be—to take charge of the *Bellone*. And all night long the battle went on.

In the morning, August 24, Lieutenant Roussin—still another admiral to be—put a prize crew from the *Minerve* aboard the *Nereid;* the three other English frigates were still firing; the battle went on—until at nine o'clock in the evening the *Magician* was set on fire by her crew, blowing up a little later. The night passed, and on the morning of August 25 it was the

turn of the *Sirius.* And the *Iphigenia* was kedging herself back out of range towards the fort. For another day they watched each other, the battered *Iphigenia,* the captured *Nereid,* the two stranded Frenchmen and the victorious *Bellone,* with the charred wrecks of the *Sirius* and the *Magician* between them—and on August 27, Hamelin was there, with a corvette and three frigates.

The French flag went up on the fort of La Passe—and on the *Iphigenia*—the Ile de France was saved for that time; and all these great names, these admirals to be, these Roussins, and Bouvets, and Hamelins, and Duperrés, hoisted sails and went out again about their adventurous business.

Cleared for action; the drums rolling through the batteries, no matter how weary the ships, in good times and bad times, with their Provence, and Normandy, and Brittany crews; descendants, spiritually, of those old battling Portzmoguers and Bidouxs, those fabulous *Levanti* captains; forerunners of the Garniers and Courbets of a later day, taking the flag to China; of those Marine Fusiliers under Ronarc'h, in 1914—those "White Johns," the brotherhood of Jean Gouin, as the Breton sailor collectively calls himself.

CHAPTER VI

TERRORS OF THE SEA

1

One has seen "Jean Gouin" and his brothers, throughout the centuries, at their fishery, at their commerce, at their navigating and exploring, at their naval enterprises. It remains to see them in another field in which they always excelled, which at certain periods of maritime history they made peculiarly their own—the field of privateering. Plain piracy, at times, along with all the other Spanish, and English, and Dutch Brothers of the Coast; formal, sanctioned, internationally accepted commerce raiding in later days, with letters of marque and royal commissions. A group of *armateurs* with a ship to equip and capital to expend; a sea dog of a captain and a crew of tough customers, seamen and fighters, to share in the profits from merchantman prizes; the royal consent—and out from Dunkirk, from Saint Malo, and Nantes, and Bordeaux; cruise after cruise, alone or in company, looking for enemy convoys; hundreds of these terrors of the sea, scouring the oceans in war after war.

And to commence with a little unabashed piracy, under the royal standard itself, there was Guillaume

de Casenove, surnamed Coulon or by the Italians Colombo, Vice Admiral of France for Louis XI.

He was a Gascon, a crony of the King's, a terror at sea and a superb navigator; surnamed Coulon, the Dove, perhaps because of some personal emblem, or because he was anything but a dove, or because his big *nef* was of that type of very large, swift vessels known as *coulons*. And the King, son of Jacques Cœur's Charles VII, having it in mind to reserve the French seas for French shipping, had commissioned his Vice Admiral to sink any Genoese or Venetian intruders who might presume to show themselves in Ponant waters without leave. Very welcome and pleasantly general instructions. So that in May, 1469, Vice Admiral Coulon, with eight ships flying the standard of France, was pouncing upon four Venetian galleys convoyed by a *nef* on their way from Flanders to London, pillaging two and capturing the rich *nef,* to the tune of thirty thousand Venetian ducats. In October he was at it again, in Portuguese waters, capturing another big Venetian *nef*.

And the Vice Admiral went right on; committing piratical havoc under cover of wars with Burgundy, with the Hanseatic League, with the Dutch—with Aragon, in the Mediterranean, where Jacques Cœur's Jean de Village was still Captain of the galleys—with England, in whose internal affairs Louis XI was all involved on the Lancastrian side. Until, in 1475, the Council of Ten at Venice was willing to pay a fat sum for the assassination of the Dove and of his pilot, Robert de Cazel, "the inspirator of all his evil designs." For Coulon was doing "more in his day than any man had done at sea," and was "more feared than any living

man." But the assassination failed, and in that same year Coulon was in command of all the Normandy shipping, cruising in every direction—capturing even pontifical *nefs*—assisted by Georges Griego, or the Greek; actually Georges Paléologue, a descendant of the Byzantine emperors.

And in 1476, off Cape Saint Vincent, with five caravels and twelve Normandy *nefs* carrying the King of Portugal and some of his troops, Coulon ran into five Genoese ships which he promptly attacked on the plea that they were Venetians, Burgundian allies, in disguise. And caught a tartar. For after ten hours of combat between his *Royale* and the *Spinola,* he began shooting incendiary fuses at her, setting fire to the *Spinola* and to two other enemy ships—and also to four of his own. And five hundred sailors and quite a few Portuguese drowned. But it had cost the Genoese one hundred thousand ducats, and in 1477 the Venetian Flanders galleys were sailing only if accompanied by at least forty ships.

And the terrible Coulon went on, until his death in 1483; now pestering the Flemish; on one occasion capturing eighty grain ships—the biggest coup "for these last hundred years." So that in 1482—while Coulon was investigating Flemish breweries for Louis XI, who was very partial to good beer—Bruges was writing to Genoa to "look out for your ships; the French pirate Colombo infests the sea with more than twenty ships; warn your captains."

2

Warn your captains—and also concerning the Breton Jehan Coetanlem. Another prodigious speci-

men, "notoriously king and governor of the sea, nor had he found anywhere in the sea one mightier or his superior."

Louis XI was dead, in 1483; Charles VIII was in his minority; the Regent, the Lady Anne de Beaujeu, was allied with Henry Tudor against Richard III of England; Coetanlem with his Bretons was capturing any ship that he found in English waters. And at Bristol they finally armed three tremendous naves against him; the captains first hearing mass "so that God might grant them the good fortune to meet the said Jehan Coetanlem in the sea; which God granted them the next day." With dire results. For although Coetanlem's three ships were outnumbered, men and guns, five to one, he gave battle; for five hours, until the English asked for a two hour truce; and after the truce he captured all three of the Bristols. But at La Rochelle, with his prizes, they annoyed him with admiralty dues and other fiscal importunities, so that he removed himself with his prisoners to Portugal, where the King gave him a palace.

And now various threads of legend cross in a curious manner. For some of the Bristol prisoners had been on a voyage into the Western Ocean, where they claimed to have seen distant lands, and it has been maintained that they discoursed of them with a certain Christopher Colombo, so called. And in 1485—in the course of events that will shortly appear—Jean de Casenove, presumably the nephew of Guillaume de Casenove, known as Coulon or Colombo the Younger, was at Lisbon, in contact with Coetanlem. And perhaps merely because Bartholomew Colombo, a brother of Christopher, was in the service of Anne de Beaujeu, legend has

tried to insist that Christopher Colombo was none other than Coulon or Colombo the Elder—not deceased at all, then, in 1483—or in another version that Christopher Colombo was a relative of Coulon or Colombo the Younger, and his companion in piracy when the Bristol yarn caught his ear.

And as for "Coulon the Younger, Vice Admiral of France" in 1485, it does not actually seem certain whether he was, in fact, an Italian sailor of fortune; or whether he was really that Jean de Casenove, possibly a nephew of Guillaume, who certainly existed—he can hardly have been the son of Guillaume, another Jean, on account of the ages involved—or whether the surname, as representing a degree of prowess at sea, had not simply been assigned to Georges Griego by the Venetians, giving rise to the assumption of the existence of two personages when only one was intended. And in the affair of the Venetian galleys, while there was always talk in plenty concerning Coulon the Younger, it was Georges Griego alone who made personal appearance at Court.

In any case, in 1485, Henry Tudor had gone from Honfleur to Wales, with an expedition convoyed by Georges Griego and, one must assume, Coulon the Younger, which was to lead him to his English crown after the victory of Bosworth. And if France was supposedly at peace now with Venice, the Republic was allied with Richard III, the enemy of Anne de Beaujeu. And having left Henry Tudor in Wales, the French fleet of seven ships was off Cape Saint Vincent when, at nightfall, four Venetian galleys appeared. Cut off as allies of Richard, and attacked at dawn, they battled for twenty hours and were finally captured, with loot to

the value of some two hundred thousand ducats—some of it handed over to Coetanlem at Lisbon to take to Provence, some of it carried to England, much of it run into Honfleur.

But Bosworth had been fought; there was peace with England and Venice; and in France there was no peace at all from the Venetian envoys clamouring for restitution and punishment. And Anne de Beaujeu was all indignation and sympathy, but at Honfleur they had other ideas. A rowdy little piratical town in those days, its famous *Rue Haute* a rowdy street of sailor taverns, resounding with the brawls of carousing mariners—and in almost every cellar, some of that Venetian loot hidden away. And when Messers Traversini and Rossetti, agents of the Venetian ambassador, presented themselves in Honfleur for the purpose of identifying their merchandise, the good mariners of the town took one look at them and murdered Messer Rossetti with riot and tumult. And a second time, when Messer Traversini again presented himself—the Venetians were quite obstinate about it—they moved with celerity to murder him likewise, so that he had to barricade himself in his room at the Fardel inn.

And eventually some persons were arrested—and promptly released; some of the merchandise was recovered; "Coulon the Younger" was summoned to Court to be fined and disowned, in the person of Georges Griego. And Honfleur went back to its manifold maritime preoccupations.

3

The sixteenth century, and a new world revealed in the West, new seas opened up to general knowledge,

filled with magnificent Spanish treasure ships awaiting the enthusiastic attention of innumerable pirates.

Some of them already lying in wait for Christopher Columbus, on his later voyages; the great Mondragon capturing ships in Cadiz harbour itself, causing endless disgruntlement to their Majesties of Spain and Portugal; Nicolas Barbe and Jean du Laerquerac; Menjouyn de La Cabanne, driven to it by poverty, terrorizing the "Isles of Peru"—so they called the West Indies—supplying himself from prize to prize, fighting nine Spanish ships at once off Santo Domingo—and capturing them.

Then official war with Spain, in the 1550s, and a perfect Gold Rush of corsairs from every port in France to "Peru"—to Central American waters—men of every station in life abandoning their homes and their occupations to "run upon" the Spaniards. And an elegant war at first, on both sides; very courteous and considerate of prisoners, very dashing in action but as yet free of the reprisals which were soon to follow. For now, with a fine singing of psalms, the Huguenot seamen came sailing into the West; the Calvinist movement had begun; Norman and Rochellese Protestant captains, and their Elizabethan cousins of England, were loose, chanting their hatred and scorn of "Papegots," transforming the war into a fury of religious passion, embittered by massacre and sacrilege—Jacques de Sores, for example, and his slaughter of prisoners, his derisive procession of Catholic emblems at Havana, in 1555—inviting the terrific cruelties of a profound Spanish abhorrence, the icy atrocities of a Pedro Menendez.

Some tremendous doings at sea. Vincent Bocquet, with three ships from Dieppe in 1553, pursuing the fourteen vessels of the convoy of the Indies for forty days across the Ocean, picking them off one by one until only eight of them arrived at Cadiz. Two little corsairs from La Rochelle and Dieppe, perishing in the Florida Channel after battling a fleet of twenty-two Spaniards. François Le Clerc, "Wooden Leg," a Normandy Huguenot; ennobled in 1551 after he had lost a leg and the use of one of his arms "without however on that account leaving his service"; terrifying the Spaniards; ransacking islands, capturing galleons; dying at sea in 1563, after a period of cruising for Elizabeth. Guillaume le Testu—Henry II's pilot to Brazil in 1551—lost in a Panaman venture with Francis Drake.

And a word for that elusive Captain Blond, of La Rochelle; fallen in with John Hawkins and Drake in 1567; present at the dismal affair of San Juan de Ulloa, at Vera Cruz; treacherously attacked by the Spaniards, all of them—there was peace again, and Hawkins was at his contraband slave trading—"sore beaten with shot" from an encircling fire from shore batteries and galleons; managing to sink four Spaniards and blow up the vice admiral ship, "where the most part of three hundred Spaniards were spoiled and blown overboard with powder." An infernal business, and a "marvellous fear" in Hawkins's *Jesus of Lubeck* when the fire ships came down; and in the midst of it all "Captain Blond meaning to have turned out of the port, had his mainmast struck overboard . . . wherefore he anchored, fired his ship, took his pinnace with all his men and came aboard the *Jesus of Lubeck* to

[Hawkins]; who said . . . that he thought [Blond] would not have run away from him: [Blond] answered that he was not minded to have run away from him, but his intent was to have turned up and to have laid the weathermost ship of the Spanish fleet by the board, and fired his ship in hope therewith to have set on fire the Spanish fleet. [Hawkins] said if he had done so he had done well."

Which was more than Hawkins would say for friend Drake in the *Judith,* when the survivors had finally clawed their way out.

4

The war of the corsairs against Spain, and to a great extent the Protestant war, went on with its furies and brutalities, resonant, always, with the sonorous music of psalms; in and out of the "Isles of Peru" until the Spanish establishments in those islands began to flicker out under the concerted persecution of an almost corporate warfare, of a floating republic, as it has been called, of Huguenot and Calvinist pirates of all nationalities. And inevitably, in the opening decades of the seventeenth century, they were forming establishments of their own; the English at Nevis, and eventually at Jamaica; the French at Saint Kitts, supported by Cardinal de Richelieu in 1625, a colony of Huguenots spreading, through the organization of the Company of the Isles, to Martinique, to Guadeloupe, to Marie Galante, to Dominica, to Saint Barts, to Grenada—the beginnings of the French West Indies, independent, sugar planting islands after the collapse of the Company in 1650, bought back from their Lords Proprietor by Minister Colbert in 1669. But long before that, in

1630, owing to Spanish aggressions, the French colony of Saint Kitts had removed to Tortuga, an island off the coast of Hispaniola, or Santo Domingo.

And in the forests of Hispaniola, where droves of wild oxen and pigs could be found, descended from the Spanish occupation, there had sprung up, already prior to 1630, a community of cattle hunters; men of all nations, but the French in great numbers; men who cured meat by the *boucan* process, and who had come to be known as *boucaniers*. So that in 1650, when one of them turned again to the profession of piracy, to be followed by countless disciples, and especially from Tortuga, it was as *boucaniers* that these men went forth; as "buccaneers" that their English associates passed the name on to posterity, although the French Buccaneer soon preferred to style himself a *flibustier*, or Filibuster.

The Buccaneers, the Brothers of the Coast. And at first the term was no misnomer. They were brothers, all these *boucaniers* and *flibustiers*, these Protestant zealots and the riff-raff of Europe—sometimes a quite well born riff-raff—that attached itself to them; obeying their elected captains, rigorously observing the clauses of their "charter parties" governing the distribution of prizes, controlled in all things by the "Custom of the Coast." And at first—incongruously enough with reference to later ferocious and libertine buccaneering manners—a very strict Custom, a very puritan code; law and order, honesty and decent behaviour; a very high courage and a perfection of disciplined seamanship; in the Huguenot ships especially, no roistering, no gambling, above all no profanity; on the con-

trary, a religious fervour, always divine service on Sundays, and the unending psalms. And death to the Catholic Spaniards.

Virtues and qualities which were not to endure after the disintegration of the brotherhood, towards the close of the century, with the defection of Morgan, the last great leader, and his transformation into a royal governor of Jamaica. After the celebrated expedition to Panama, in 1670; the largest gathering of the Buccaneers that ever occurred, when some two thousand of them in thirty-seven ships met at Cape Tiburon. But before that day, already, the old religious spirit had died out; cruelty and bad faith had set in, a swashbuckling depravity, and roaring times at the rendezvous of Tortuga and Jamaica—in the West Indian ports where the merchants were not squeamish, where pirate loot filled the warehouses and pirate gold rolled down the streets.

Pirates in plenty—Tristrian; Bréha who was hanged; Hamelin; La Bouse; Daniel; Vigeron; Jocard; Lessage; Cachemarée, which was not his real name; Bournano; Dulaïen, with his "Pitiless," who accepted the King's amnesty, and smuggled loot to the value of one hundred and sixty thousand *livres* ashore at Nantes before they heaved him into prison; Montauban, who was once blown up with his ship, and whose men had the habit, on leave at Bordeaux, of driving around the town preceded by lighted torches, at high noon—there was to be no end of pirates, down to the Lafittes of Barataria and New Orleans, in the 1800s, and an examination of their monotonous exploits is not the purpose of these pages. But the original Buccaneers and some of their successors were cut from a

slightly different cloth, and one must pause before certain of their names.

5

Pierre le Grand, to start with; reputed to have been the very first of the Buccaneers, whose single and very remarkable adventure sent them all down to the beach, pushing off, in the beginning, in mere cockleshells to cruise "to and fro" and prey upon the lumbering Spanish traffic.

A Dieppe *armateur* of distinction, ruined in business, he had gone out to Hispaniola, there to provide himself with a wretched little boat carrying twenty-eight men. And having cruised fruitlessly for some time, and hungrily, coming upon the Spanish vice admiral ship—it sounds incredible, as do most of the Buccaneer exploits—he bored holes in his own boat so that his men "might be compelled to attack more vigorously and endeavour more hastily to run aboard the great ship." And the Spaniards, "seeing the pirates aboard their ship without scarce having seen them at sea"—they had paid no attention to that insignificant boat—"cried out Jesus bless us! Are these devils, or what are they?" And what with one thing and another—with Pierre le Grand at the magazine, threatening to blow up the ship—the Spaniard surrendered. And Pierre le Grand went home to Normandy, and lived prosperously, and very quietly, ever after.

Montbars, the Exterminator, one of the cruel ones—but deliberately, like Pedro Menendez—possessed of a profound hatred of the Spaniards by reason of their own atrocities. A fiery, swarthy Gascon nobleman, a "terrible" man built like a giant, who submitted

his prisoners to unrecordable tortures. "Governor" of a flotilla of fifteen vessels carrying some nine hundred *flibustiers,* which sacked Maracaïbo, in Venezuela, and fought its way out to sea through the "Gullet" after smashing three fine Spanish frigates. One of the great terrors of his day, operating out of Saint Barts, coming to an end, good or bad, which has not been recorded.

Ravenau de Lussan, a gay, adventurous, elegant young blade of good family, loaded with debts in Paris, who took to buccaneering in the 1680s as a means of meeting his creditors. Almost unique among the *flibustiers* in that he left a published account of his enterprises, in Nicaragua, in Honduras, and across the Isthmus into the "Southern Sea"—an extraordinary odyssey of combats and successful forlorn hopes, ships against fleets, handsful of men against whole Spanish towns; and yet so commonplace in the long annals of buccaneering as to discourage any detailed exposition of what must always, after all, have been a monumental Spanish impotence—from which it would appear that he was ever a very moral, religious, well principled young man; exhorting his crews in the Christian virtues, leading them to mass before turning them loose on some captured town; very gentle with prisoners, and very kind to the ladies—who, in turn, were always very kind to him. Filling his pockets with enough piastres to assure him a lifetime of affluence in Paris, whither he promptly returned. Lussan the fascinator, charmer of ladies, Buccaneer of romance.

And another, eighteenth century, romantic; not a Buccaneer, actually, but akin to them, with his own republican, floating brotherhood—the astonishing Captain Misson.

The youngest of a large Provence family of good standing, a precocious student and reader, navigation and travel, he was serving in the navy, in the Mediterranean, when at Naples he met a strange character—unfrocked priest, atheist "socialist"—the Italian Caraccioli, who forthwith attached himself to the ship, and to the task of converting Misson to his communistic philosophy, in which he completely succeeded; so that on a subsequent cruise to the West Indies, in the same *Victoire,* Misson himself was converting the crew. And when, in the course of a victorious engagement with an English warship, the *Victoire's* captain was killed, it did not take long for the eloquent Caraccioli, citing the examples of Alexander, Mahomet and Darius, to persuade Misson to take command of the ship; nor did the equally eloquent Misson experience any difficulty in persuading the crew to accept him as the leader of an elective, independent, marine community.

In other words, His Majesty's *Victoire* had become a pirate.

But with a difference, a very startling difference. They were not pirates, it seemed; they were simply "men who were resolved to effect the Liberty which God and Nature gave them"—with much talk about Tyranny and the Soul. They were not dissolute pirates, Heaven forbid; they were the apostles of Liberty, and on their flag, a *white* flag, they would inscribe "For God and Liberty." They would take from other ships only those supplies that they needed—they did that to an English sloop, to her intense astonishment; later on they took prizes, fast enough—sixty thousand pounds of loot in one case—but always in the pleasantest manner, surprising their victims by "the Regularity,

Tranquility and Humanity of these new fashioned Pyrates." They even killed people occasionally, to their endless dismay, with Misson shedding tears over an English captain inadvertently slain, whom he buried ashore with military funereal honours.

And aboard they were strict, religiously moral. They would have nothing to do with the slave trade—this was in the early 1700s—a traffic which "could never be agreeable to the eyes of Divine Justice." Misson made grave speeches about it, addressing his "brave companions," his friends, his children, "those gallant, those generous, noble, heroic souls he had the honour to command"; admonishing them, also, concerning the depraved habits of certain Dutchmen whom they had taken aboard from a prize; fellows who swore and who drank, presenting an "odious example," alluring Misson's men "to a dissolute way of life" such as was not permissible in the *Victoire*—and, indeed, any Dutchman caught "with an oath in his mouth or liquor in his head" was first to be flogged, and then pickled.

Of course they could not go home. They stopped for a while on an island in the Indian Ocean, where Misson married the sister of the native queen; later they moved to a harbour in Madagascar, to build a little fortified town, "some place to call their own . . . a receptacle . . . where they might enjoy the fruits of their labour and go to their graves in peace." Libertatia, they called it, a communistic Utopia; and Misson chosen Lord Conservator for three years, with "all the ensigns of royalty to attend him," paradoxically; and Caraccioli Secretary of State; and the kindly English pirate Tew, who joined up, Admiral of the Fleet; and a Session House where the council deliberated, without

regard to nationality or race, in a language especially evolved.

But there was trouble in time; trouble between Tew and his men, so that Misson had to rescue him; trouble between the natives and Libertatia, so that the survivors had to put off to sea once more. And Misson gave half of his jewels and gold to Tew, and he sailed away; to perish in battle against a ship of the Grand Mogul's. In fact, "a shot carried away the rim of Tew's belly, who held his bowels with his hands for some space," and then died. And Misson sailed away, never to be seen again.

To some "new fashioned pyrates' " paradise, no doubt.

6

As for the Chevalier de Grammont, one of the greatest of the later Buccaneers, there was nothing new fashioned about him. Gone into the navy as the result of a hot headed duel in Paris; in command of a commerce raiding royal frigate in the West Indies; he had proceeded, in the gambling dens of Hispaniola, to lose his share of the proceeds of a four hundred thousand pound capture; on the next cruise he lost the frigate, cast away on a reef. To return home seemed impossible, and he joined the brotherhood of the coast; soon, by reason of his courage and upright personality, to become one of the most popular of *flibustier* captains.

In 1678, with seven hundred men behind him, he was at Maracaïbo, sacking the place, spending six months in the vicinity, marching overland to capture Torilha, returning to Tortuga with only some forty

survivors from the fevers of Venezuela. In 1680 he was out again, attacking La Guayra, the port of Caracas, with forty-seven men, defending himself against several hundred Spanish reinforcements, himself severely wounded, getting his men away and carrying off the Governor. A contract, then, with the great Dutch Buccaneers Van Horn and de Graaf, and in 1683 they were off, quite calmly, to take Vera Cruz.

Twelve hundred men in four ships, to attack a fortified town garrisoned with three thousand soldiers. They did it by stratagem, passing themselves off in the offing as Spanish ships which the port was expecting; then at night landing eight hundred men to capture the forts. And with a great bursting of powder barrels which they rolled through the streets, in a nocturnal panic which paralyzed any resistance, Vera Cruz fell; to be ransomed for four days to the tune of sixty million piasters in gold, silver and precious objects. And when a Spanish fleet of fourteen ships appeared on the scene, the Buccaneers sailed away, unrestrained. But this time there was trouble; a quarrel between the Dutch captains and a duel, and Van Horn suddenly dead of his wound; the ships separating, two of them lost in a hurricane, a third taken by the Spaniards, and Grammont coming in alone to Jamaica with Van Horn's.

Grammont acclaimed from one end of the Coast to the other as Buccaneer chief.

Grammont, in 1685—while Captain Grogniet was sacking Granada and Guayaquil—leading a thousand men to the capture of Campeche; an extraordinary land operation against the usual Spanish confusion; and at the end of it Campeche taken, the fort taken, Campeche

occupied for two months, then Campeche burned as a parting gift to the Spaniards. Grammont "pardoned," in 1686; restored to the navy. But there had to be one final buccaneering fling. He sailed—and vanished.

7

And now a terror of terrors, cruel to a turn, an "infernal wretch . . . full of horrid, execrable and enormous deeds."

François L'Ollonais—by his real name Jean David Nau—a native of the Sables d'Ollone, on the West coast of France; a good for nothing youngster, indentured to a *habitant* of Martinique; ill treated and gone away to sea; landed on Hispaniola to assist *boucaniers* at their meat curing; ill treated again and gone to join the Buccaneers, after murdering his brutal master; given a ship, finally, by the Governor of Tortuga—it was in the earlier, favoured days—and almost at once a remarkable reputation for courage and ferocity; a captain who "pillaged great riches," but who gave no quarter, and "withal his cruelties against the Spaniards were such that the very fame of them made him known through the whole Indies."

But a storm put his ship ashore at Campeche; his men were pursued by the Spaniards, and in the fray he was killed; a great day for the Spaniards, and bonfires at Campeche to celebrate the event—but of course he was not dead at all; he had smeared himself with blood and shammed it; he was actually in Campeche dressed as a Spaniard, watching the bonfires, assembling some runaway slaves, stealing a boat in which he returned to Tortuga. Soon he was near Los Cayos, in Cuba, with twenty-one men in two "canoes."

And when Los Cayos reported the rumour to Havana, the Governor thought it unlikely, believing L'Ollonais to be dead, but he sent along a ten gun ship carrying ninety men and a hangman. She anchored in the river, and during the night L'Ollonais's two canoes came sneaking alongside—and that was the end of that story. He caused eighty-nine Spanish heads to be chopped off, one by one, and the ninetieth Hidalgo he sent back to Havana to inform the Governor that he hoped to do the same to him, in return for his "kindness," and that he would "never henceforward give quarter to any Spaniard whatsoever."

And while L'Ollonais was away at Maracaïbo, capturing prizes with the ship which he had "with craft and subtlety" obtained, the Governor of Havana was "troubled to understand these sad and withal insolent news."

And now, in 1667, they were off with a fleet of eight ships to ransack the Spanish settlements. Four hundred men, *boucaniers* and Buccaneers, L'Ollonais in command, Michel le Basque—one of the "ancients," aroused from his prosperous retirement at Tortuga—to have charge of the land operations. And off Hispaniola they captured a Spaniard in which they found "forty thousand pieces of eight and the value of ten thousand more in jewels." And these were very nice things to find. And at Maracaïbo they landed, to discover that the inhabitants—experienced in piracy, and preserving "a fresh idea of that misery"—had removed to the town of Gibraltar. It is not necessary here to repeat the progress of the usual events ashore; Maracaïbo occupied, Gibraltar taken after a furious battle; enormous ransoms extorted with unspeakable tortures;

Gibraltar burned. They sailed home with the loot, and with all the church bells and vessels of Maracaïbo; and not a piastre disputed, an exact and honourable division, and shares for the families of the men who had perished. They were all wealthy for life—and lost it all, almost immediately, in the taverns and dives of Tortuga, and in the costly adornment of their vanitous persons.

And so L'Ollonais was off again, along the coast of Central America; taking ships, capturing towns, torturing prisoners—he liked very much to pull out their tongues—but the venture was not really successful; they were always short of supplies; and most of his companions abandoned the raid. L'Ollonais would not leave; but he lost his ship on a sand bar; he had to build a boat from the wreckage; an expedition to the River of Nicaragua was smashed by the Spaniards; with a few men he tried to reach Cartagena—but he was taken by Indians who "tore him in pieces alive, throwing his body limb by limb into the fire and his ashes into the air: to the intent no trace nor memory might remain of such an infamous, inhuman creature." But really to the intent that they might eat him for supper.

And so he perished—a very pathological pirate.

8

The brotherhood fell apart; the spirit had changed; the great chiefs were gone. With the breaking out of the War of the League of Augsbourg, in 1688, the Buccaneers returned more and more to their separate allegiances, no longer united against one common enemy, Spain. At Tortuga, and in Hispaniola, in 1691, the Governor, Jean Ducasse—a naval officer of

renown, son of an obscure little merchant of Bayonne, destined in later years, during the War of the Spanish Succession, to receive the Golden Fleece for his services in convoying the Spanish merchant fleets from America —was transforming the *flibustiers* into peaceable settlers, planters of sugar, founders of estates. But there was to be one last great assemblage, one final rallying of the French Buccaneers, seven hundred strong; a sanctioned sortie, organized by Ducasse under orders from the navy, for the sack of Cartagena, in 1697.

It was in the last year of the War of the League of Augsbourg; Squadron Commander de Pointis had received the royal loan of navy ships and men, for an expedition against Spanish Cartagena of the Indies financed by a public sale of shares. At Hispaniola, in spite of difficulties caused by de Pointis's jealous temperament, Ducasse had his *flibustiers* and other volunteers to the number of one thousand lined up, himself prepared to command them under de Pointis—nor would any sort of co-operation between the *flibustiers* and de Pointis have endured if Ducasse had not been present. They sailed, in March, for Cartagena; de Pointis with his four thousand men in thirteen ships, including a vessel called the "Furious Apollo"; Ducasse with his people in seven frigates.

And again one does not propose to follow the vicissitudes of shore operations, in which the Buccaneers served as troops of assault against the outer forts. Under cover of a fleet bombardment the town was attacked and besieged by land, its defences forced, and on May 3 the capitulation of Cartagena was received—an event the repercussion of which in Europe had a great deal to do with bringing about the Peace of Rys-

wick. With Ducasse as Governor, the assembling of the ransom was begun, on the whole in quite orderly fashion, without undue pillage or constraint, for a total of some nine million *livres*.

But soon there was grave trouble, aside from epidemics; it seemed that the Buccaneer share was to be much less than had been understood; Ducasse was furious, and the *flibustiers* were ready to turn on de Pointis; but the Commander had already placed the ransom aboard his ships; Ducasse concealed the true state of the proposed accounting until his own men were safely embarked; and the fleet departed, for Hispaniola and France. But now the Buccaneers were very definitely suspicious; they were to be done out of a prominent part of their loot—and without a by your leave to Ducasse, who was aboard one of the royal ships, they returned to Cartagena *and ransomed it again,* for five millions.

And there in exasperated Cartagena, with that last pleasantry to their credit, one must leave them.

9

The wars.

The Dutch War, from 1672 to 1678. The War of the League of Augsbourg, from 1688 to 1697. The War of the Spanish Succession, from 1701 to 1713. The War of the Austrian Succession, from 1740 to 1748. The Seven Years' War, from 1756 to 1763. The American War, from 1778 to 1783. The Wars of the Revolution and of the Empire, with intermittent interruptions, from 1794 to 1815. Sixty-eight years of war in less than a century and a half. And if on earlier pages one has examined the pernicious effect

upon the navy, at various periods of these wars, of ministerial incompetence and tactical states of mind—so that on numerous occasions, after La Hogue, for instance, after the disaster of Vigo, in 1702, after Monsieur de Conflans's Day, during the Revolution, the navy was rendered ineffective and inactive—there was one class of shipping that remained unaffected by these influences, unrestrained in its activities, conspicuous for its seafaring achievements.

The privateers. The independent captains and crews, financed by local *armateurs*—sometimes loaned, ships and officers, by the navy—that went out in swarms from every port in France, through war after war, carrying the King's commission to raid commerce.

Indeed, privateering in France—the destruction of enemy commerce afloat—was not to be merely a side issue of naval warfare; it was to become, at times, its sole manifestation, its principal object, an accepted and long cherished economic and strategic policy—the immediate results of which were phenomenal, however debatable its ultimate soundness. Always a matter of romantic appeal, of financial inducement to individual seamen and merchants—a matter of constant speculation in all ranks of society, not excluding such personages as Madame de Montespan and the Marquis de Seignelay—it remained for Minister Louis de Pontchartrain, in 1692 after La Hogue, to establish privateering, and commerce raiding by the navy, as an official enterprise, a governmental preoccupation, a royal command—frequently a royal participation in armaments on the King's own account—which sent all maritime France thenceforth rushing to sea against merchantmen convoys in very fine frigates, or in any-

thing that would float, in the 1790s in the tiniest fishing smacks; which made of such ports as Dunkirk and Saint Malo, although one hesitates to single out any one of them, veritable nurseries of corsairs for the next hundred years, cradles of generations of prosperous privateer families; men who made it a business ashore, a career on the ocean, seamen and two-fisted fighters of resounding celebrity, reinforced by some great names from the navy.

Names, names, private and navy, hundreds of names —until one scarcely knows where to begin, where to pause, where to leave off.

Charles de Keyser, Jacobsen, Doorn, Van Crombrugghe—the fine Flemish names out of Dunkirk—Bommelaer, de Wulf, Van Stabel; Kanon, de Cock, Berlamont; Bacheliers, Morals, Glassons; François Poulain, Valentin Sery, Pierre Frérard who fought for two hours with a mutinous crew, only fourteen of them facing the enemy, and died. Bayonne and the Basques, Jean Peritz, Joannis Le Coursic; Captain Duler, painter and sailor, who took his wife with him to sea; Jean d'Albarade, privateer, Minister and Admiral during the Revolution; Darribeau, Jorlis, Soustra, Garrou, Pellot—who escaped from a Plymouth prison in the uniform of an English admiral. Briolle, Perroud, Dubédat of Bordeaux. The Doublets of Honfleur, merchantman father and privateer son. Nicolas Gargot, of La Rochelle, who lost a leg in the wars and then commanded his *Léopard,* wearing a wooden one; attacked by mutineers in his cabin, when the leg was unstrapped, fighting them off with his swords, with his pistols, with his books; getting his leg on again, charging out of the door, left for dead on the deck and then spared; landed

in Spain and thrown into prison, befriended by a Spanish lady; released, and continuing at sea for another ten, arduous years; dying, in great poverty, in 1644, after thirty-two years of service.

The seven Thiercelin brothers of Nantes, *armateurs* and long distance captains, three of them dead at sea; Jean Crabosse, Jean Vié, Réné Le Coq, Jacques Le Chantoux, heroes of legendary combats against astonishing odds; one of them, Vié, sent for by Genoa, put in command of a Venetian fleet, killed by the Turks in 1717. Bertrand de La Bourdonnais, of Saint Malo, scouring the Pacific and Indian Oceans; Alain Porée, and his brother Charles, taking the English fifty gun *Dartmoor,* in 1695; Alain and a Malouin consort fighting four Dutchmen and capturing three; Alain wounded in action, losing his arm, undergoing two operations on board, reading directions for the surgeon out of a book.

Saint Malo—Hervé Dufresne, Boscher, Gouin, Claude Raoul; Surcoufs, Danycans, Porcons; Linbert, Potier, Bertrand Herbert—nineteen year old Terre Neuve captain who came home, in 1707, with his cod, and with some fifty thousand *livres'* worth of unexpected prize money; discharged by his fisherman *armateurs* for his unauthorized privateering escapade, ending his days as a monk in the Pacific—Daniel, Tréhouart, Etienne Bourdas; Grout de Saint-Georges, whom Louis XV called "one of my best officers"; Guillemin, Boishamon, Gonidec, Arondel . . .

But perhaps one had better stop.

10

One stops, and immediately one begins again.

Cornelissens, Van Mecherens, Colaerts—sixteenth

and seventeenth century names—Dauwerses, Rombouts; the Flemish names once more, and one is in Dunkirk. Dunkerque of the many allegiances, Flanders, Burgundy, Spain, England, until the final acquisition by France in 1662. Duyn-kercke, the ninth century Church of the Dunes; a little channel into those dunes, and six rows of sand banks outside to protect it—and hinder it—a little town growing up, essentially maritime. Nothing there but the sand and the sea, and a tough, salt incrusted race of seafaring men on that Flanders coast ever since Roman days; pirates already in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the Belfry going up in 1450, with the beacon to guide them in—the Belfry from which "Mary the Mournful," siren of doom, was to wail her warnings of German air raids some four hundred years later; fishermen in the early part of the sixteenth century; belligerent fishermen, battling with Dieppe, in 1555, twenty ships to eighteen for eight hours, a fearful affair and a bad day for the Flemish, five of them captured, seven of them burned.

Then little by little a tradition of piracy; a habit, a science, a passion of piracy; against the Dutch, against the Protestant "Tramps of the Sea," against the Huguenot corsairs; a merciless war to the death, no quarter and no surrender, any seaman of Dunkirk caught by the Dutch drowned on sight—they called it "washing his feet"; in the seventeenth century against Dieppe and Saint Malo, but seldom against the neighbours of Calais and Boulogne. Dunkirk from now on, in the 1580s, partly by reason of its sand locked approaches which did not permit then of commercial development, committed to the professions of piracy and privateering, conducted with a gallantry of reckless

courage, a mastery of seamanship, which were to establish the great wealth and amazing renown of the "Eagle of the Sea."

A solid, unshakable, aggressive, come one come all little stony faced town—and they were to come repeatedly through the centuries, English and Dutch, Spanish and French, and the Germans, by land and by sea, and in due time by air, with siege and bombardment. Verdun of the sea; cited by the National Convention, in 1793, as having "merited well of the nation" —cited in army orders, in 1917, as the "heroic city, serving as an example to the entire nation"; the target, for four years, of some seven thousand projectiles, from destroyers, from bombing planes, two and three raids a night, from long distance guns destroying three houses at a time; home port of the Flanders Banks patrols, trawlers and mine sweepers manned with seamen and fishermen from Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne; performing a magnificent, unrecordable task of sailor endurance and tenacity, month in and month out, and in that fiendish North Sea winter of 1916 on a coast ice bound from Holland to Cape Gris Nez. One of the most sublime pages in French maritime annals; the saga of that excellent, and almost always completely silent and obscure individual, the plain "man of the sea."

A tough, rowdy, rampageous little hornet's nest of a town in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; very disturbing to the Bishop of Ypres, in 1703, who found it "one of the most disorderly . . . composed of all sorts of nations . . . [containing] many land and sea troops, a circumstance slightly calculated to sanctify cities." Overflowing with French privateer seamen exempted from the Class system of navy recruiting,

and with foreign volunteers from every maritime nation attracted by the allurements of what was still, in very many instances, the unrestrained practice of piracy. A thieving, murdering, deserting, mutinous lot, in particular the foreigners; drunken, rioting, roisterous, pillaging hellions—pillaging the prizes, as often as not, disregarding the limitations of their acknowledged right to the *pluntrage* of captured personal effects—and their officers often no better, with their carousals, and gambling, and duels, for the sword at the side, plebeian or noble, was a privateer privilege; and their *armateurs* just as bad, inciting commotion and uproar, preventing navy enlistment in order to increase private enterprise and their own consequent financial profit. All in a turmoil of spies and escaping prisoners.

Very religious; a definite share of all prize money always turned over to the hospital, to the convents and to Saint Eloi church; always the mass, *pro peregrinantibus,* attended by departing crews—and then the *armateur's* banquet and wine, the so called *Foyus* or *Folhuys,* a great brawl of a dance—and soon the Marine Archers tramping the streets, searching the taverns for deserters and bounty jumpers; the ship firing her summoning guns; the *Tourrier* or "Towerer" in the Belfry tolling the bell, while the *Clinqueur* went through the port "clinking" his official brass gong with an ivory hammer.

And then in nine cases out of ten this unspeakable riff-raff went out, through enemy squadrons blockading the end of the channel, to incredible exploits in seas perilous with tempest and warfare, returning in a glory of fabulous combats with millions of loot.

II

One simply cannot pause to look at them all, not even at Dunkirk, and they were roaring in the same manner out of every port in France. But still, at Dunkirk, some of them—Squadron Commander de La Pailleterie with his six galleys, in 1702, mixing it up with twelve becalmed Dutch warships and capturing one of them; a feat "without example." Louis Le Mel, a strange character; in 1695 capturing five merchantmen anchored in a squadron of warships in the Thames; taking a vessel in the Texel, in the presence of a Dutch fleet; cruising constantly until 1709; repeating his trick in the Thames, in 1706; several times a prisoner himself; a "most enterprising man," capable of any "extraordinary action"—and a "master rascal," a "hardy liar," always in debt, always involved with women, frequently insubordinate—arrested, in 1710, for connivance with the enemy, bastilled, released, rearrested for debt, escaped in 1715. Vanished, abandoning his wife. Cornil Saus, one of that continually seafaring Flemish tribe; a modest, charitable, pious old fellow—but "devout as he is he could not go to Paradise" without his ship, his "dear *Victoire*"; twenty-two years commanding at sea, since 1689, covered with wounds; with his crony, Nicolas Baeteman, considered the finest privateer captain afloat; finishing his days, in his seventy-ninth year, at the Hospital to which he had given all his worldly goods.

François Thurot, who once escaped from an English prison and rowed himself across to Calais; an energetic and enormously courageous captain, cruising in the tempestuous North and Baltic Seas; well received at Court by Louis XV, and by Madame de Pompadour;

much esteemed in England for his kindly treatment of prisoners; involved, in 1759, in a royal expedition against England and Ireland—a long drawn out exasperation of mutinies, and military delays, and jealous commanders; ships crowded with troops, and supercilious army officers and their servants who annoyed Thurot, and whom he offended by his plebeian manners; the original plan betrayed by spies, and yet when he sailed there was great excitement in England, and Parliament voting credits, because the "fox" was known to be loose in the North Sea.

And then storms and mishaps; a miserable month of January spent at the Faroe Islands rendezvous, with supplies running short, and complaints from the fatuous military commander regarding the quality of the soup; some acute suffering, discomfort and starvation, and a mutiny among the army officers who resented their enforced presence aboard a privateer, and who detested Thurot and thought him crazy, persisting for his own glorification in a footless, ill fated cruise—a senseless cruise, actually, after the news of Monsieur de Conflans's Day had reached them. An attack, finally, on Carrickfergus which surrendered when the English officer in command of only two hundred soldiers replied "Fiddledidee!" to the mayor.

And on February 28, 1760, Thurot in the thirty-two gun *Maréchal de Belle Ile,* accompanied by the *Blonde* and the *Terpsichore*—accompanied, but not supported —overhauled by three English thirty-six gun frigates. For nearly two hours he fought them, alone, his sulking consorts remaining in the offing; and after Thurot had been killed and his body thrown overboard according to his instructions, when the *Belle Ile* surrendered, her

crew was decimated, she was smashed to kindling wood, and she was sinking with five feet of water in the holds. And so Thurot perished, perhaps somewhat of a megalomaniac—they were still arguing about him eighteen years later—but the English were full of praise for him, and wrote ballads about his last fight. And in 1794 the French courts had not finished liquidating the accounts of the expedition.

And some great names from the navy. Captain de Roquefeuil, in the forty-six gun *Protée,* serving with the Chevalier de Saint-Pol, a celebrated commander in charge of the Dunkirk royal squadron. And in 1705 the *Protée* was out, in company with Saint-Pol's fifty gun *Salisbury*—previously captured by him from the English—and the fifty gun *Triton,* the thirty gun *Jersey* and seven small vessels; capturing eight English ships; running into the Baltic convoy escorted by the fifty gun *Pendennis* and *Blackwall,* and the thirty-two gun *Sorlingues.* And while the small ships were tackling the eleven merchantmen, without waiting for the slow moving *Triton,* the *Jersey* went after the *Sorlingues* and took her, the *Protée* boarded the *Blackwall* and took her, the *Salisbury* came at the *Pendennis* to board her—and Saint-Pol was immediately killed. Dismay and confusion, and the *Pendennis* came down on the exposed side of the *Protée,* catching her with most of her men aboard the *Blackwall* which they had just captured. And the *Pendennis* was pounding the *Protée* to pieces, so that there was nothing for Roquefeuil to do but call back his men from the *Blackwall,* and send them piling onto the *Pendennis* to capture her as well. A very brilliant engagement, the forty-six gun *Protée* conquering two fifty gunners. But at Dunkirk there

was a great funeral at Saint Eloi church for Saint-Pol, and for the captain of the *Triton* too, killed at the last moment, just as he was entering the battle.

The dashing Claude Forbin, Saint-Pol's successor with the Dunkirk squadron, who had been with Duquesne at Algiers, and on a mission, in 1685, to Siam, where for two years they made him Grand Admiral, under the name of Oprasacdisomcram. A man of "unbounded ambition," avid of honours and wealth, recklessly intrepid. But at the same time insubordinate, arrogant, quarrelsome, envious, loose in his morals, dishonest financially, always brawling and duelling; resigning, finally, from the navy in a fit of the sulks, and his resignation promptly accepted. A very bad specimen, but a remarkable commander.

And in September, 1706, he was out in the *Mars,* with the *Salisbury,* the recently captured *Blackwall* and *Sorlingues,* and the *Jersey* and *Héroine;* sailing in the night into the stationary lines of a convoy of seventy Dutch guarded by six warships. There was a very rough sea, and at four o'clock in the morning Forbin gave the order to board—himself attacking the Dutch flagship *Raaf,* his men on her deck when another Dutchman attacked him, and in the midst of it the *Blackwall,* partly dismasted, ramming herself on the bowsprits of the *Raaf* and the *Mars.* The three of them jammed together, smashing up and down in the heavy weather; the *Blackwall* driving away still another Dutchman; and suddenly the *Raaf* on fire, the *Blackwall* hooked onto her for half an hour, getting clear at last just before she blew up; the *Mars* already gone clear, in desperate shape, with water pouring into the tweendecks, fighting off two more Dutchmen. A fright-

ful business, and elsewhere the *Jersey* was out of commission, the *Salisbury* was engaged with a heavier ship, and the little *Héroine* and *Sorlingues* were busy capturing the fifty gun *Hardenbroeck*. And when these battered ships sorted themselves out in the gale, two Dutch warships were accounted for, but the convoy had escaped.

And in May, 1707, with nine ships of which his sixty gun *Mars* was the largest, and some corvettes and Dunkirk privateers, he found himself in presence of fifty English merchantmen convoyed by a forty gun frigate, the seventy-six gun *Royal Oak*, and the seventy gun *Grafton* and *Hamptoncourt*. Forbin attacked, and when they were through the frigate had gone with twenty-eight merchantmen, four more were burned, the captains of the *Grafton* and *Hamptoncourt*, and of the French *Salisbury*, were dead, the *Royal Oak* had fled, and Forbin was sailing into Dunkirk with eighteen merchant prizes and the captured *Grafton* and *Hamptoncourt*, "very beautiful, absolutely new." And in June he was out again, in the Baltic, up to the North Cape, taking thirty-four prizes in two months; and since Dunkirk was closely blockaded, he transferred his captured merchandise, burned his prizes, and sailed his squadron home to Brest all the way round the British Isles. And he "prayed" the Ministry to "consider that it is your little squadron of Dunkirk that is causing all that havoc!"

So much havoc habitually out of Dunkirk that as a condition of the peace in 1713, and again in 1763, England required the closing of the port and the demolition of Vauban's famous fortifications—and a Commissioner in residence to see that they were not restored—since

it seemed to the English that Dunkirk in action was responsible for the loss of seven-ninths of their merchant traffic. But somehow, with each new war, Dunkirk was always as busy as ever, its port in operation, its fortifications impregnable.

12

The American War, and more havoc out of Dunkirk; Cottin, Castagnier, Delattre; Ducasson, Trosse, Harduin, all killed in action; Lhermite and Pierre Van Stabel who were to be admirals in the Revolution. And Jean Royer, a Dunkirk boy, gone to sea in the merchant service at the age of eighteen, privateering in small ships with poor crews in 1778, to support his mother and three sisters. Always fighting odds; on one occasion a frigate and a brigantine together, to the dismay of his own officers; on another occasion smashing up seven armed colliers, bringing back as prisoners "thirty-eight men, including a woman"—she was the owner of the colliers—as he quaintly reported it.

Then out in a larger ship with a better crew, performing exploits in every direction, frequently on hostile anchorages; in 1780 put in command of a squadron of five small ships, himself in the twenty gun *Rohan Soubise*—and the *Clinqueur* clinking his brass gong around town seventeen times to collect her crew on sailing day—attacking two frigates alone, out in advance of his squadron, and driving them off; later, with the *Rohan Soubise*, the *Robecq* and the *Calonne*, attacked by four strong frigates; the *Robecq* and the *Calonne* holding off three of the enemy, while the *Rohan Soubise* is having a knock down fight with the fourth

at pistol range. And in the late afternoon Royer is fearfully wounded, his ship is in splinters, the *Robecq* is ordered to run for it, the *Calonne* as well, but the *Rohan Soubise* stands by to protect her. Then a calm, and everyone rowing, three English frigates dropping back gradually, waiting for the fourth that is too disabled to follow. And two days later Royer is dead.

And a word for the Yankees, for Dunkirk had forty-seven of them working for local *armateurs*—obstreperous fellows who would not obey the King's order to fly the King's flag, upsetting the port with American innovations; John Chitty; Bennett Negus, who with twenty guns successfully fought three English vessels; Christopher Codner; Thomas Abbott; Luke Ryan, who took eighty prizes; Edward MacCartner, bringing in one million *livres* in one trip to his *armateur* Jean Torris. And a great fishery revival after the war; in 1787, as the result of the efforts of a Dunkirk *armateur* to attract American whaling crews, a whole colony of Nantucket whalers, some five hundred of them, settled at Dunkirk by royal permission to foster the industry. Some of them, like Benjamin Hussey, remaining throughout the Revolution, holding "civic processions" to establish their republican sympathies in a town temporarily become Dunes Libres or Free Dunes, in the throes of the Terror.

Some of them still there during the Empire, to see Gaspard Malo and Etienne Blanckeman—with a price of one thousand guineas on his head—privateering for millions; to see Blanckeman brought back in triumph to Dunkirk, in 1814, after a ghastly captivity of eight years in English prison pontoons.

And an end now to privateering, an end to the

Folhuys, and to the ivory hammer clinking its call on the brass gong of departure.

13

But one has not finished; the greatest names of all are to come.

Jacques Cassard—one takes them at random, without regard to chronology—Jacques Cassard of Nantes. Born in 1679, the son of a merchant on the *Fosse;* gone to sea in the 1690s; with de Pointis at Cartagena, in 1697; in command of a merchantman at eighteen, falsifying his age; privateering in 1705. A hard, driving commander, careless of his men, extremely laconic, accomplishing "more with one ship than an entire squadron." In 1708, for instance, attacking two warships and thirty-three merchantmen, capturing five of them single handed.

And in 1709, alone in the *Eclatant*—in the Mediterranean where he was protecting grain convoys with royal ships equipped at his own expense—he was caught by an English squadron of fifteen warships; three of them, fifty odd gunners, engaging him at close range in a running fight that lasted six hours, during the course of which he dismasted one of them. It was midnight, and now a seventy gun ship joined in, trying to board, driven away, the running fight then continuing until two in the morning, when a second Englishman was dismasted, the others abandoning Cassard. And at six o'clock two fresh Englishmen overhauled him, fighting at close range for two hours more, until Cassard smashed them to bits. For ten hours he had battled six different ships—two of which sank afterwards from the effect of his fire—three at a time for

the greater part of the combat. And the grain ships were safe at Marseille—but the Municipality refused to refund the expenses, on the plea that Cassard had not actually escorted the convoy. And a lawsuit begun which was to lead him into endless difficulties.

And in 1712 he organized and partly financed an expedition against the West Indies; capturing the Cape Verde Islands on the way, then Montserrat, Antigua, Surinam, Saint Eustatia and Curaçao for enormous ransoms—a total of nine million *livres*—proceedings which greatly accelerated the Dutch desire for peace in 1713. But now Cassard turned—for the next twenty odd years—to his lawsuits and claims; a dreary process of fruitless litigations and increasingly violent petitions for reimbursement of expenses incurred in 1709 and in 1712; and perhaps it is true that it drove him insane, as the Minister declared when he had him locked up in prison, where he died.

14

Robert Surcouf of Saint Malo, the "King of the Corsairs," the "fox of the foxes." Born in 1773, great-grandson of Robert Surcouf, a celebrated privateer under Louis XIV; descended on his mother's side from the famous privateering Porcons; related to the corsair *armateur* Trouins; a turbulent, quarrelsome, truant youngster, strong as an ox, a leader of gangs; a boy who lived only for ships, so that they had to let him go off to sea at the age of thirteen. In the merchant service for the next seven years or so; long distance voyages to France Island and India; arduous voyages, tempests and wrecks, and the young Surcouf always in

high favour, forever studying, perfecting himself in rigging, and navigation, and Indian hydrography. Volunteering aboard the frigate *Cybèle,* in 1794—one of a small squadron of France Island ships that went out devotedly to repulse an attack on the island from India—taking part in her fine engagement against the sixty-gun *Centurion.*

A comic interlude, then, of illicit slave running into France Island, after the National Convention had abolished slavery—but at the Ile de France and Bourbon they took all these matters with grains of salt, disregarding such Convention revolutionary decrees as seemed to them unsuited to local conditions. But still the slave trade itself was forbidden, and at Saint Paul, on Bourbon, Surcouf was caught black handed one day by certain solemn Commissioners of the Colonial Committee of Public Safety. They came aboard to confer—and found themselves unexpectedly cruising in a very rough sea, with disastrous effects upon their internal felicity, so that they were only too pleased to arrive at arrangements looking to their speedy restoration to land, and no questions asked. And a great roar of laughter all around the Mascarene Islands at this escapade.

And in 1795 he was out in the four gun *Emilie,* with thirty men; armed for self defence only, for he had no privateer commission and his voyage was strictly for purposes of trade. But Surcouf had other ideas. And it was not long before he was taking prizes in Bengal waters, much needed grain cargoes—technical piracy, but England and France were at war, and what of it—among them the pilot brig *Carter* to which he transferred his own crew and guns; proceeding to the

capture of a rice ship, which left him with nineteen men aboard the *Carter* when he found himself in presence of the twenty-six gun East Indiaman *Triton,* carrying a crew of one hundred and fifty. And after approaching her, disguised as an English pilot, he ran up his French flag and boarded and took her, killing the captain with his own hand—and a tremendous sensation throughout India at this amazing exploit; and the Madras paper full of his "attention and politeness," his treatment of prisoners with the "greatest humanity." But at France Island they very properly confiscated his captured merchandise, on the plea of his piracy, so that he finally returned to France to effect a compromise, receiving a part of the value in token of "recompense," after long months of argument.

And in 1798 he was off again—twenty-five years old — in command of the fourteen-gun privateer *Clarisse,* duly commissioned, taking with him his experienced older brother Nicolas. And for two years they went scouring about in the Indian Ocean, capturing countless prizes—two sixteen gun Americans at once on one occasion, for neutral flags meant nothing in Surcouf's fundamentally piratical young life—while his sailors sang "Drink once, drink twice, to the health of lovers, to the health of the girls of France, and —— for the King of England who declared war on us!" A great lot of hellions ashore at the Ile de France, these Surcouf sailors, with their commander encouraging them with money and wine, setting them the example, so that they adored him and fought for him like wild cats. A very high liver, he was now, feeding himself well at sea, very dressy and fastidious, very witty and gay, boiling over with energy and violence, a tough

customer but always capable of excellent manners and courtesies.

And in 1800—one cannot pretend to record all of his cruises—in the beautiful eighteen gun *Confiance,* with one hundred and thirty men, he met the thirty-eight gun East Indiaman *Kent,* carrying lady passengers and some four hundred men, including General Saint John and a body of troops. And what does Surcouf do but attack the *Kent,* his men dropping aboard from their crosstrees in two divisions, Surcouf in the lead—and a furious battle royal on the deck, around the mainmast, in the tweendeck, the English captain killed, and the *Kent* finally taken with considerable looting. But the ladies' cabins were respected, and while all the English on deck were tied up after a marine had taken a pot shot at Surcouf, the General preserved the friendliest feelings for his captor, and visited him later on at Saint Malo. And now Surcouf was legendary; his name was a bugaboo throughout the nurseries of India; and the English had an enormous price on his head. So he sailed the *Confiance* into La Rochelle through their blockade, jettisoning seventeen guns to lighten his ship when they chased him; and in 1801 he was home, loaded with loot from his two million franc capture. But the *Kent's* bullion and gold dust were at the bottom of the bay at France Island, thrown overboard by Surcouf's order when the local authorities presumed to claim them for their own. And —— for the local authorities.

He was married; and then there was peace for three years, while Surcouf engaged a tutor to teach him the things that he had never learned at school—extraordinary man—and then there was war again, and in 1807

he was out in his own splendid "Ghost." But at France Island, in 1808, General Decaen needed ships to protect the island; he seized the *Revenant*, giving Surcouf Motard's old *Sémillante;* and Surcouf was going to shoot Decaen, but they stopped him; and then Decaen ordered him to take the Portuguese prisoners home, and Surcouf landed them all again and sailed without them. And —— for Decaen. They seized all his property for that, but Napoleon restored it, and in later years Surcouf and Decaen become friends once more.

Surcouf retired from the sea; he was enormously wealthy, and for the next eighteen years, until his death in 1827, he occupied himself with shipping; sending out privateers for his own account until 1815. The famous fourteen gun *Renard* among them, that fought the sixteen-gun *Alphea* to a standstill on a tempestuous night of 1813 in the Channel. A desperately bloody affair for three hours, the two crews chasing each other back and forth from deck to deck in a pounding sea, hurling any missiles that came to hand, the guns so hot that they could no longer be touched, the *Renard's* captain killed and hardly a man left standing, and the *Alphea* blowing up at the end with all hands.

"And —— for the King of England who declared war on us!"

15

Saint Malo again, and another representative of that interrelated tribe of Porcons, Surcoufs and Trouins, all of them seamen, *armateurs* and corsairs—the Trouins hereditary Consuls at Malaga, Saint Malo in Spain, for two hundred years—Réné Trouin, *Sieur* du Gué, who eventually called himself Duguay Trouin.

Born in 1673—the Trouin house is still standing, with its facade of carved wood—brought up in that wealthy, *armateur,* seafaring family atmosphere; in that entirely maritime town, rowdy with sailors, soon to resound with the hurly burly of the "Interloper Trade" to Peru, with the disorderly uproars of "Jean Gouin" at his Tavern of the Beautiful Englishwoman; already in 1672 devoted, no less than Dunkirk, to the profession of privateering, its religious scruples—for devout, merchant Saint Malo had needed to be reassured—its religious scruples set at rest by the approval of the Church. Réné Trouin, with that Malouin background and ancestry, sent by his parents to the College at Caen to be made a priest; Réné Trouin, theological student, gambling and roistering, parading about with a very long sword, picking duels.

Réné Trouin called home by his mother—the father had died—sent, inevitably, to sea, at the age of sixteen, in a family ship, the privateer *Trinité.* Réné Trouin, descendant of sailors, desperately seasick. And once he fell overboard. But in 1692, at nineteen, he had his own little ship, the fourteen gun *Danycan,* entrusted to him by the family conclave, presided over by his mother and brother Luc. And a long privateering career was begun, in varying ships; very modestly at first, with many mishaps—he was not long on navigation, and not very experienced—but always he was learning, and always he showed courage and gumption. Too much courage sometimes, always very bold and intrepid—it was to cost the life of one of his brothers—as in 1694, in the *Diligente,* when, dismasted, he fought six English warships at once and would not have surrendered, but his officers made him. And then he

escaped from his prison, with various intrigues and blandishments involving a young woman of the town.

A bachelor all his life, he was always to be involved with women; he was always to spend his money like water, on his ships, on his friends—and ruin himself and his family—ostentatious and extravagant, in his later days keeping open house for his officers, but not intemperate; impetuous, eager for glory; very quick tempered, very hasty in anger and extremely profane, but always just in the long run, fair to subordinates; a great disciplinarian, a stickler for preparation and painstaking, careful of his men; often, by his own admission, very frightened, forcing himself to temerities of courage; a believer in omens, in presentiments, in dreams, many of which came true. Forty-seven years in service, gaining commission after commission in the navy, winding up his career as Lieutenant General.

And in 1695, in the fifty gun *François,* he met the fifty gun *Nonesuch* and the brand new thirty-eight gun *Boston,* a gift to the King of England from his loyal city of Boston; attacking them both, partly dismasting the *Boston,* grappling the *Nonesuch,* letting go when he saw her on fire, grappling her again and again letting go because he was himself on fire; keeping in touch through the night; grappling the *Nonesuch* at daybreak; clearing himself when two of her masts fell into his rigging; chasing the *Boston* and taking her; coming back to the *Nonesuch* and taking her too—only the *Boston* was in turn taken by four Dutch corsairs during the storm which scattered the ships. But Duguay Trouin had the *Nonesuch,* and he saved his own damaged *François;* and they gave him a sword of honour

and put him in the navy under Nesmond—where he ignored all the rules and had to be reprimanded. And that winter he was at Court, presented to the King, making eyes at the ladies, annoying the "officers in red," while they repaired the *Nonesuch* for him, renaming her the *Sans Pareil.* Twenty-two years old.

And in the *Sans Pareil,* with two Dutch prizes, he fell in with an English squadron, passing himself off as English, sailing along with them—he liked little jokes of that sort—until a frigate, suspecting his prizes, gave chase to them, so that he had to put her in sinking condition in the presence of the entire squadron. Later on, in 1697, with five ships, he attacked a convoy of nineteen merchantmen escorted by three Dutch warships. One privateer after the merchantmen—ten of them were captured—Duguay Trouin boarding a Dutch fifty-two; two more privateers taking another Dutchman; the fifth privateer boldly grappling the fifty-four gun flagship *Delft*—catching fire immediately, an explosion aboard, obliged to let the *Delft* go. Duguay Trouin leaving his boarding party aboard his Dutchman, going off to help his burning consort, boarding the *Delft* four times with the remnant of his crew, and with terrible damage to himself, taking her, finally, with the help of one of his other ships. And a storm after the battle, Duguay Trouin sinking, five hundred Dutch prisoners at the pumps, the wounded half drowned in the tweendecks, the ship kept as much as possible on tacks that heeled her over on the safe side, guns thrown overboard to lighten her—a night of this, and in the morning they were safe in port.

And "the *Sieur* Duguay Trouin has conducted himself with extraordinary bravery." They made him

Frigate Captain for it, a very great honour indeed—all at once, disregarding preliminary navy ranks, disregarding the fact that he was a plebeian, not a member of the Great Corps. And the young man very proud of himself, very brash, proposing changes in the regulations and told to pipe down. Twenty-four years old.

And in 1703, in the fifty-eight gun *Eclatant,* cruising in company with the *Furieux* and the *Bienvenu,* he fell in with fifteen Dutch warships; and because his consorts were very slow sailers, he fought the *Eclatant* against the Dutch van guard until the others had gotten away. And it seemed to him that "of all my adventures this is the one that has pleased me most, and that has appeared to me most worthy of entitling me to the esteem of really generous hearts." 1704, 1705, constantly at it—one of his younger brothers, Nicolas, in command of the twenty-six gun *Valeur,* mortally wounded in action against a forty-four gun Flemish corsair—and in that same year, in the fifty-four gun *Jason,* with her sister ship the *Auguste,* Duguay Trouin was chasing the English fifty-four gun *Chatham,* when the two Frenchmen landed spang in the middle of the enemy fleet. They turned tail at once, six Englishmen after the *Auguste,* fifteen after the *Jason.* And during a night of calms the *Auguste* was taken, but the *Jason* escaped, after fighting off the sixty gun *Worcester* and ghosting her way through the surrounding squadron. Always fighting warships, this young Duguay Trouin, and, in common with most privateers,—for eighteenth century tactics.

Then in 1706, with two ships, chasing one hundred Portuguese merchantmen and six warships into Lisbon, damaging the warships, driving one ashore, killing the

Portuguese Admiral; quarrelling with the Spaniards at Cadiz, put into prison for a while—and Louis XIV *very* angry, and the Spanish officials discharged—returning to Brest with a captured frigate and ten prizes. And they made him Ship of the Line Captain, Chevalier of the Order of Saint Louis with investiture from the King in person, and Captain General of Coasts. Thirty-three years old.

"Splitting with zeal," as he informed his superiors.

16

And in 1707 Duguay Trouin was out with Claude Forbin. A powerful squadron, including Forbin's *Mars, Blackwall, Salisbury* and *Driade,* and Duguay Trouin's brand new seventy-two gun *Lys,* his *Achille, Jason* and *Maure,* all fifty guns or better, and his frigates *Gloire* and *Amazone*—all fitted out by Saint Malo *armateurs.* And off Ushant, in October, they sighted an English convoy of one hundred and twenty ships, protected by the eighty gun *Devonshire* and *Cumberland,* the seventy-six gun *Royal Oak,* and the fifty gun *Ruby* and *Chester.* And with admirable courage, which Duguay Trouin was always to remember, the English warships prepared to stand their ground, while the merchantmen scattered, chased by the *Amazone* and the *Driade,* who captured ten of them.

And of course Duguay Trouin immediately attacked, very imprudently—inferior himself to the English—expecting Forbin to follow and handle the *Devonshire;* but Forbin, with his royal ships to preserve, was not following so fast, not dashing in so blindly; and soon there was desperate business on all

sides. The *Jason* and the *Maure* disposing of the *Chester* and the *Ruby;* Duguay Trouin, in the *Lys,* letting the big *Cumberland* come at him sideways, catching her bowsprit in his rigging, the *Gloire* grappling her at the same time, the *Cumberland* raked by the *Lys,* broadsided by the *Gloire,* boarded and taken as her masts came crashing down; elsewhere the *Achille,* with explosions aboard, trying to grapple the *Royal Oak,* the *Amazone* coming to help, with Forbin arriving in the *Mars,* and the *Lys* joining in to drive off the *Royal Oak* who escaped; the *Blackwall* and the *Salisbury* smashed to bits by the *Devonshire;* the *Lys* and the *Mars,* everybody after the *Devonshire.*

She fought like a lion, surrounded by enemies; Duguay Trouin was never to forget it, nor the horror that followed, just as he was about to board her—for in the twinkling of an eye the *Devonshire* was on fire, a furnace from stem to stern and her masts blazing like torches, the ship rolling her ports under, burning above and sinking below; and no help for her, no way to get near her on account of the fire, and only three men saved out of nine hundred. Duguay Trouin had been the nearest to her, extricating his *Lys* by a hair's breadth of time, and he remembered the scene all the rest of his life. And now Forbin returned to Brest with the three captured warships and the prizes—his prizes, he told everybody, his battle and his achievement; until Duguay Trouin arrived at Versailles and nearly massacred him in the Minister's office, and the truth became known.

And in 1709 the Trouin brothers were ennobled; Luc for his widespread *armateur* activities; Duguay for his exploits at sea.

17

And at Rio de Janeiro, in 1710, a French raid had been defeated, the terms of the surrender ignored, the prisoners ill treated and the commander assassinated. And the Trouins had an idea. The "hope of an enormous booty, and especially the honour of carrying the glory of the King's arms to those distant climates and punishing the inhumanity of the Portuguese."

And at Brest—quietly, secretly, with subterfuges, false identities and concealed destinations—Luc and Duguay armed the seventy-four gun *Lys* and *Magnanime,* the sixty-six gun *Achille, Brilliant* and *Glorieux,* and the frigates *Argonaute, Amazone, Bellone, Astrée* and *Concorde;* two small vessels at La Rochelle and two more at Saint Malo; at Dunkirk the fifty-six gun *Mars;* at Rochefort the sixty gun *Fidèle* and the frigate *Aigle.* And in June, 1711, this very considerable private armament sailed from La Rochelle for Brazil.

And at Rio, to get into the port, they had to pass in single file—sometimes within musket range—through a narrow entrance between two forts; then three more forts, and another on an island, faced by another on the main land; in the presence of an enemy squadron; under the additional fire of numerous shore batteries and fortifications manned by twelve thousand men. And this done, and the Portuguese shipping destroyed, and the island fort captured—all under a murderous bombardment for days—there was an army ashore to be conquered—but it finally surrendered—while the French squadron battered the town, and the Portuguese set fire to the warehouses and blew up the batteries. So Rio was taken, after Duguay Trouin had

threatened to burn it, in "a frightful confusion" of looting, a "fury of pillage which nothing could stop." And a ransom of some thirty million *livres.*

They sailed away in November—the *Aigle* to Cayenne and the *Concorde* to Peru—and off the Azores there was a terrible storm, three terrible storms in succession, scattering the ships; the *Achille* and the *Glorieux* crawling into port alone; the *Mars,* entirely dismasted, drifting in later; the *Lys* in peril for twelve days, all her sails blown away, her mainmast broken, and water pouring in; getting into Brest, at last, with the *Argonaute,* the *Amazone,* the *Bellone,* the *Astrée* and the *Brilliant.* But never any word again from the *Fidèle* and the *Magnanime,* lost with twelve hundred men and six hundred thousand *livres* of loot. But still the *armateur* profits were enormous; Europe was ringing with the affair; Duguay Trouin was promoted Squadron Commander; and if at Rio he had saved all the church fixtures and given them back to the Jesuit Fathers, there was a bell for Saint Malo just the same—the famous "Noguette."

And then there was peace—peace for nearly thirty years—and nothing for Squadron Commander Duguay Trouin to do, except to become a Lieutenant General, and command at Brest and Toulon, and fight a little against the Barbaresques. And die, in 1736.

18

And now a great name at sea; out of Dunkirk again; a great name at sea for three hundred sailoring years; the name of Bart. Ba', as they pronounce it at Dunkirk, esteeming it their most precious possession.

One comes across them in the sixteenth century—but there was a Samson Bart at Harfleur in 1400—Dunkirk corsairs and pilots, always plain, unexalted, ordinary mariner stock; Jean Bart, in 1545; Antoine Bart, fisherman captain in 1569; another Antoine, seaman, presumably a son, father of ten children intermarrying with seafaring Jacobsens and Dauwerses; two of them, Michel and Gaspard Bart, corsairs of note; in the next generation, Cornil Bart, corsair again, in 1660; three of his sons privateers, Gaspard, Jacques, and the greatest of all, Jean Bart—three known generations of seamen behind him, and in his veins the blood also of countless Colaerts, Janssens, Dauwerses, Jacobsens and Kerlyncks, Flemish captains, squadron commanders and admirals; his mother a Janssen, his grandmother a Jacobsen, daughter of Vice Admiral Michel Jacobsen, the "Fox of the Sea."

And after him two sons and a grandson; Jean Louis Bart, who served under Forbin in the *Héroine* when they fought the Dutch in the storm, and whom Forbin called "a real little lion," and who died at eighteen; François Cornil Bart, who followed the sea for nearly seventy years and finished Vice Admiral; his son, Philippe François Bart, who passed through the Marine Guards and was Squadron Commander and Governor of Santo Domingo. And still more of them down through the years—only one, to his shame, had to serve in the army because he was incurably seasick—the descendants of Jean Bart's brother, Gaspard. A remarkable maritime family.

Jean Bart, a "great man of the sea," born in 1650; serving as a boy in his father's ship in the 1660s; then under Ruyter with the Dutch, during their war against

England in which his father was killed; with Ruyter in 1667 when he sailed up the Thames; still in Holland after the peace, a great friend of Charles de Keyser, another Dunkirk seaman in foreign service; both of them summoned home, along with all the French volunteers, when France went to war with Holland in 1672. The two of them, Bart and Keyser, privateering together, taking valuable prizes; Bart very courageous and enterprising, attacking frigates with his eighteen gun vessel, always leading his boarding parties in person, accounting for eighty-one ships in ten engagements during the six years of the war; so that when Minister Colbert asked for confidential reports on some thirty Dunkirk captains, Bart, with Keyser, was at the top of the list. Commissioned in the navy in 1679; commanding merchantmen; campaigning against the Barbaresques in 1681—bombarding his brother Jacques Bart's ship when her crew turned mutinous during an action—Frigate Captain in 1686.

And in the midst of it all, in 1675, Bart had found time to be married—to the daughter of the proprietor of the tavern which he frequented with his crew, for he liked his ale and his pipe—when he was not shooting rabbits—indeed, he liked very much to roister about with his Flemish sailors, hard specimens whom he understood how to control better than anyone. A blond, blue eyed giant—he was enormously tall—an excellent seaman who knew every sand bar and shoal in the Narrow Seas; a rough, uncouth personage, no doubt, of no education, but he could write, he spoke English and Flemish—although French very badly—not at all the boor and the clown that Forbin and others have put into History; very generous, very solicitous

for his family and dependents, very careful of his men, as he acquired wealth very particular in his affairs, making a new will every time that he sailed; endowed with good judgment, and a hard common sense, and a very great personal valour. Later on a little conceited, and extremely independent—very free with the ladies, too—and dreadfully overbearing. But there was good reason.

19

1688 and the War of the League of Augsbourg; the privateers swarming out; Jean Bart in the twenty-four gun *Railleuse,* with his brother Gaspard aboard, and his ten-year-old son, François Cornil—whom legend, no doubt apocryphal, insists that he lashed to the mainmast, in order to teach him courage, during the capture of a fifty gun Dutchman. 1689, and Jean Bart in the twenty-eight gun *Jeux,* with Forbin under his orders in the *Railleuse,* reduced to sixteen guns; escorting a convoy of twenty merchantmen; running into the forty-eight gun English *Nonesuch* and a forty-two gun consort. Some of the *Jeux's* men sent to reinforce three of the merchantmen, they to attack the English forty-two with the little *Railleuse,* while Bart tackles the *Nonesuch* so that the remainder of the convoy may get away. But the three merchantmen had no taste for it; Bart and Forbin fought alone for two hours, smashing the *Nonesuch,* killing her captain—Duguay Trouin was to capture her in 1695—all smashed up themselves, both of them wounded, surrendering, finally, after the convoy had gone. Imprisoned at Plymouth, both of them escaping out of the window, rowing for fifty-two hours across to Saint Malo.

And Forbin went to preen himself at Versailles, but, as Vauban wrote to the Marquis de Seignelay, "the other, good Fleming, came back home. The truth is that he gave me as excuse the fact that not knowing how to speak French very well, and having been defeated, he did not dare hazard presenting himself before the King in such a state; but that, when he has properly avenged himself, then if they want him to go [to Versailles] he will go. There, more or less, *Monseigneur,* is the way fighting men ought to be." They made him Ship of the Line Captain, and he married again—his first wife having died—a very fine young lady, this time, from the high *bourgeoisie.*

In 1690 he was with Tourville at Beachy Head; in 1691 closely blockaded by the English at Dunkirk, where the "passes" between the six rows of sand banks made navigation extremely difficult, restricting the possible avenues of exit and entrance, greatly simplifying the process of blockade. But Jean Bart was always to be a wizard at running blockades; he knew his banks like a book, he knew his winds and his currents, and the draft of his vessels; when the English were here he went there, when they were there he came back here, and when they had him completely cornered he went over the shoals. There was no question of stopping him. And this time, with Forbin along—after waiting for fifteen days on the outer anchorage with eight small vessels, watching a fleet of thirty-nine ships, some of them sixties and eighties, that made no move to attack him—he picked a good night and sailed through the lot of them, negotiating the passes in masterly fashion, pursued by twenty odd English, taking with him as well nine privateers from Dunkirk—Gaspard Bart,

Cornil Saus, Jean Glasson, Michel Kerlynck, Charles Jacobsen, all the big names—for a raid on the English coast.

And after that he did go to Court—for one thing to refute certain jealous accusations of pillage—and maybe he did smoke his precious pipe in the galleries of Versailles, and maybe he did shove his way through the crowd, but they thought he was splendid, and fell over themselves to see him; so much so that Forbin went off in a huff.

They gave him a squadron of four ships, and in 1692 he took them out of Dunkirk, at noon, through a blockade of thirty-two ships; running eventually into Admiral Shovel's squadron which was escorting King William from Holland to England; and Jean Bart bombarding the royal ship with great gusto; but Dutch William forbade his captains to reply, and pulled down his distinguishing royal standard, "so that Bart led them, cannonading them, as far as the harbour where they anchored"—which was one way of bringing the King of England home—and even Tourville, still smarting from La Hogue, had to laugh. And later on Jean Bart and Cornil Saus were falling on a Dutch convoy of one hundred merchantmen and three warships; and while Saus was capturing four of the merchantmen, Bart was taking one of the warships, driving off the two others, and then boarding ten more of the merchantmen. And later, again, in 1693, with his sixty-two gun *Glorieux,* Bart was attacking six Dutch warships mounting a total of two hundred guns, driving them ashore and burning them; going on then to join Tourville at Lagos, for the affair of the Smyrna convoy.

Always enterprising, always daring, always fortunate; some lucky star always shining for him up in the sky.

20

And now, in 1694, the important thing was wheat. The navy's war had ended at La Hogue, the French ports were blockaded, the country was nearly starving. The wheat ships were the only salvation. Jean Bart had six frigates, and with them he had to bring twenty-eight wheat ships into Dunkirk from the Baltic, threading his way through English and Dutch fleets. And no news of him in France for a while—until the watchman on the Belfry at Dunkirk saw the English ships assembling outside, and then they all knew that Jean Ba' was coming. And he came, with sixteen of the convoy—eleven more got in later—passing "with all his ships between certain sand banks where no ships had ever passed, preferring to perish rather than to allow his convoy to be taken by the enemy." And they made him Chevalier of the new Order of Saint Louis. That was in March, and in June he was out again, through the blockade—playing will-o'-the-wisp at night, this time, with decoy ships—to fetch in some hundred odd wheat ships expected from Norway.

And off the Texel he found ninety-six of them, with their unconcerned Scandinavian escorts—captured the day before by eight Dutch warships; two fifty-eights, a fifty-four, two fifties, a forty-four, a forty and a thirty-four. Jean Bart had seven ships, a fifty-four, three fifties, a forty-four, a forty and a twenty-four. One ship and seventy-six guns less, and with these he attacked, in the presence of the spectator

Danes and Swedes. Let each French ship grapple a Dutchman, and trust in Jean Bart. And half an hour later he had taken the Dutch flagship, her Admiral was mortally wounded, two other Dutchmen were captured, five were in flight—their captains mobbed in Holland, four of them sent to prison—and the French ships were all so battered no pursuit was possible. But Jean Bart had the wheat ships—he only lost four of the ninety-six on the way home—and at Dunkirk, before he died, the Dutch Admiral wrote that never had he been "at such a party" and never had he seen men fight "with so much ardour and produce so great a carnage."

And at Dunkirk, all over France, when Jean Bart arrived—he always went out and he always came in, without any interference—they went wild; they came to meet him in processions, the royal officials, the port authorities, the clergy; they sent young François Cornil post haste to Versailles with the news, and then straight to the King at Saint Germain—where the boy slipped on the polished floor, and Louis XIV laughed and remarked that it was clear that "Messrs. Bart are better sailors than equerries." And when François Cornil picked himself up he was an ensign in the navy, and for Jean Bart there was a patent of nobility. Because his action off the Texel was "very glorious for [him], very useful to the State, and greatly pleased the King."

But the Dutch and the English were not pleased, and late in the year everyone was rushing to Dunkirk for the attack of the combined fleets—the Admiral of France, Marshal de Villeroy, Princes of the Blood; and Jean Bart out in small boats patrolling the jetties

for "infernal machines." But the attack failed, and soon he was at sea, shepherding seventeen wheat ships, sounding his way back across the shoals along the Dutch coast in a fog, coming back to Dunkirk in January, no doubt thumbing his nose at Admiral Shovel's blockade. And in August, 1695, the combined fleets were back for another attack, one hundred vessels and fire ships, twelve hundred bombs fired into the town; but the people were ready, warehouses had been emptied, there were tubs of water before every house, and Jean Ba' was out there in front, holding one of the jetty forts. The attack failed again, and he went to Versailles for a while.

But there was no rest for Jean Bart, and in 1696 he was out with seven ships—the Squadron of the North—through the blockade as usual; capturing thirty Dutch merchantmen and five warships; face to face, suddenly, with thirteen more warships. And he ran, and no nonsense—after standing by, cleared for battle, until the last merchantman prize, the last captured warship, was burned, right under the noses of the approaching fleet. Cruising around afterwards, in foul weather, dodging one English and Dutch squadron after another, doubling on his tracks among the shoals, playing tag with pursuit, sliding back into Dunkirk through "ant heaps" of enemy ships. And now he was Squadron Commander, and in 1697, with eight frigates, he had to take the King's cousin, the Prince de Conti—candidate for the throne of Poland—to Danzig. Out of Dunkirk, through a blockade of thirty ships, choosing the pass which no one expected, the wrong pass for the prevailing wind but the right pass, somehow, for Jean Bart. To Danzig, and then back again, because

the Poles did not like the Prince de Conti and would have none of him.

And the Peace of Ryswick was signed.

21

During the course of the war Jean Bart had captured or burned thirty warships, some hundred and thirty merchantmen, not including the Texel affair. Now he was Marine Commander at Dunkirk—and, somehow, one does not think any less of him for being suddenly enormously strict, a driving taskmaster, very much on his high horse, very abrupt with subordinates—so that the navy loathed him, and insulted him, and would not serve under him, jealous in any case of his plebeian rise—very quarrelsome, very independent, always in trouble with officers of the pen, with "officers in red," with superiors, with the Ministry; so that Madame Bart was always smoothing things down, using her social influence to pacify injured dignities and official displeasures. Jean Bart was in his fifties, he was a national hero, the world was his quarterdeck, he was, primarily, a big spoiled child to be handled with gloves, and humoured, and tolerated, as they well knew at the Ministry where they considered him indispensable—which he well knew.

And suddenly he was dead, in 1702, from a cold which he caught while inspecting his new seventy gun *Fendant* at Havre. He was dead, and the King was deeply distressed, France was struck dumb—the War of the Spanish Succession just beginning—Dunkirk was petrified. It was an "irreparable loss," for "never a man was more enterprising, or more fortunate in his

enterprises, taking on himself many things which no other man will ever dare to attempt."

They gave him a magnificent funeral, during a terrific storm, and buried him in the choir of Saint Eloi; just across the street from the Belfry where the *Tourrier* had so often watched for Jean Ba'.

22

Jean Bart was dead, but the name was still at sea; François Cornil Bart, his son, on his way to a vice admiralcy; Gaspard Bart, his brother, privateer *armateur;* Gaspard's son and grandson, Pierre Jean Bart and Benjamin Nicolas Bart.

And in 1745—aided by three Irish *armateurs* settled in France, one of them born at Saint Malo, d'Heguerty, Ruttledge of Dunkirk and Antoine Walsh, the Malouin, at Nantes—Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, grandson of James II of England, was crossing to Scotland for that last Jacobite adventure which was to end at Culloden. He sailed, in July, with Antoine Walsh, in the latter's eighteen gun frigate *Du Teillay* commanded by the great privateer captain, Claude Durbé, of Nantes; joined a few days later by the royal sixty-four gun ship *Elizabeth,* fitted out at Dunkirk by Ruttledge, captained by Pierre Du Hau with Pierre Jean Bart, Ruttledge's brother-in-law, as second. And on July 20, at five in the morning, eight English ships were in sight, one of them, the two decker *Lion,* crowding on sail to pursue, then holding off all day waiting in vain for the rest of the squadron, then proceeding to battle at five in the afternoon.

And Durbé and Du Hau had arranged it that the

Elizabeth should grapple the *Lion,* the *Du Teillay* then to come alongside the *Elizabeth* and put reinforcements aboard; but the *Lion* kept always between them, holding off the *Elizabeth* with a murderous fire, while the little *Du Teillay* could only await an opportunity which never came to put the original plan into operation. And so for five hours the *Elizabeth* fought the *Lion,* in one of the bloodiest single engagements ever recorded—and yet seldom mentioned—and when the firing ceased the *Lion* had surrendered—but she got away again during the night, because the *Elizabeth* was too battered, all her small boats smashed, even to put a prize crew aboard—and Du Hau and ten of his officers were dead, eighteen others and some one hundred and fifty men out of commission, and Pierre Jean Bart commanding throughout almost the entire battle. He spoke Durbé for a while, and there was nothing to do but separate; the *Du Teillay* going on with Charles Edward to Scotland, the *Elizabeth,* in sinking condition, nursed back to Brest with her dead.

Some long distance merchant sailing to the West Indies and to Guinea, and in 1759, during the Seven Years' War, Pierre Jean Bart—with his twenty-year-old son, Benjamin Nicolas, aboard—was away in the forty gun *Danaé,* accompanied by Captain Juin of Dunkirk in the thirty-four gun *Harmonie,* to carry supplies to Canada; very heavily laden, very low in the water, very slow. And on a day in March, with the *Harmonie* astern, three English ships hove in sight, giving chase; the thirty-six gun *Melampus* and *Gosport,* and the thirty-four gun *Southampton.* Bart had instructions to avoid all engagements, to get his supplies to Quebec; but he would not abandon the *Harmonie;* he

slowed down and let her come up, then draw ahead, with the *Melampus* and the *Southampton* closing in on him; and in the evening the battle began.

The *Danaé* against the *Melampus* at first—while the *Harmonie* skirmished with the *Southampton*—the two ships tangled up in each other's rigging, and a furious musketry fire; the *Harmonie* shooting broadsides in the dark, losing her mainmast; the *Danaé* in very grave difficulties; the *Gosport* arriving. Suddenly, in the obscurity, the *Danaé* sailing past the *Harmonie* in great disorder, answering no hail, her guns silent—and Captain Juin concluded that she had surrendered, and cracked on all sail possible; only to hear gun fire again when two leagues away; but now he had made his decision, he had his supplies to think of and a mast to repair, he could not tell what was happening back there in the night. He assumed, reasonably enough—and a court of enquiry later upheld him—that the *Danaé* was also running for it, and he did not turn back.

But back there in the night, in the *Danaé,* some dreadful things had happened. She had not surrendered when the *Harmonie* saw her sailing by at ten o'clock, but Pierre Jean Bart had just had both legs shot away; she was not firing at the time, or answering hails, because they were all preoccupied with their commander, trying to save him—a shuddering scene—by stuffing him, what was left of him, in a barrel of sawdust. But in a few moments he was dead. And the renewed firing that Captain Juin had heard later on was not the *Danaé* running for it; it was the youngster, Benjamin Nicolas Bart, taking his father's place, plunging again into battle, fighting for an hour or

more against the three Englishmen—until he, too, had a leg shot away—and while the surgeon was attending to him, both of them killed outright by the same cannon ball. And still the *Danaé* did not surrender. With another youngster, twenty-year-old Jacques Gaspard, in command, she fought for another hour—and when she did finally strike she was entirely dismasted, she was on fire, completely smashed up and sinking, she had only two guns in action, and a hundred dead on her deck.

So they perished, those two Barts, father and son; and a stout ship gone to glory.

And still the name was at sea; for while Jean Bart's line was to end with his grandson—Philippe François Bart, the Governor of Santo Domingo—young Benjamin Nicolas Bart of the *Danaé* had a brother, the seasick army officer, whose son and grandson were both in the navy. And at Dunkirk, in 1815, there was a famous privateer, the *Sophie;* the last privateer ever armed in that port; commanded by a youngster in his twenties. The last privateer captain hatched by the "Eagle of the Sea"—a youngster called Joseph Marie Bart.

Splendid men of the sea; great names, and a tradition that endures—and to this day the good seafaring people of Dunkirk are suspected of saying their prayers to Jean Bart's tombstone at Saint Eloi; and not long since they were still willing to believe that Jean Ba' would some day return; on one occasion, recently, that he had actually returned.

And at night, sometimes, off the Flanders coast, you can see his ship, all aflame, and his tall shadow guiding her over the shoals.

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